Cromartie
HIGH SCHOOL
5

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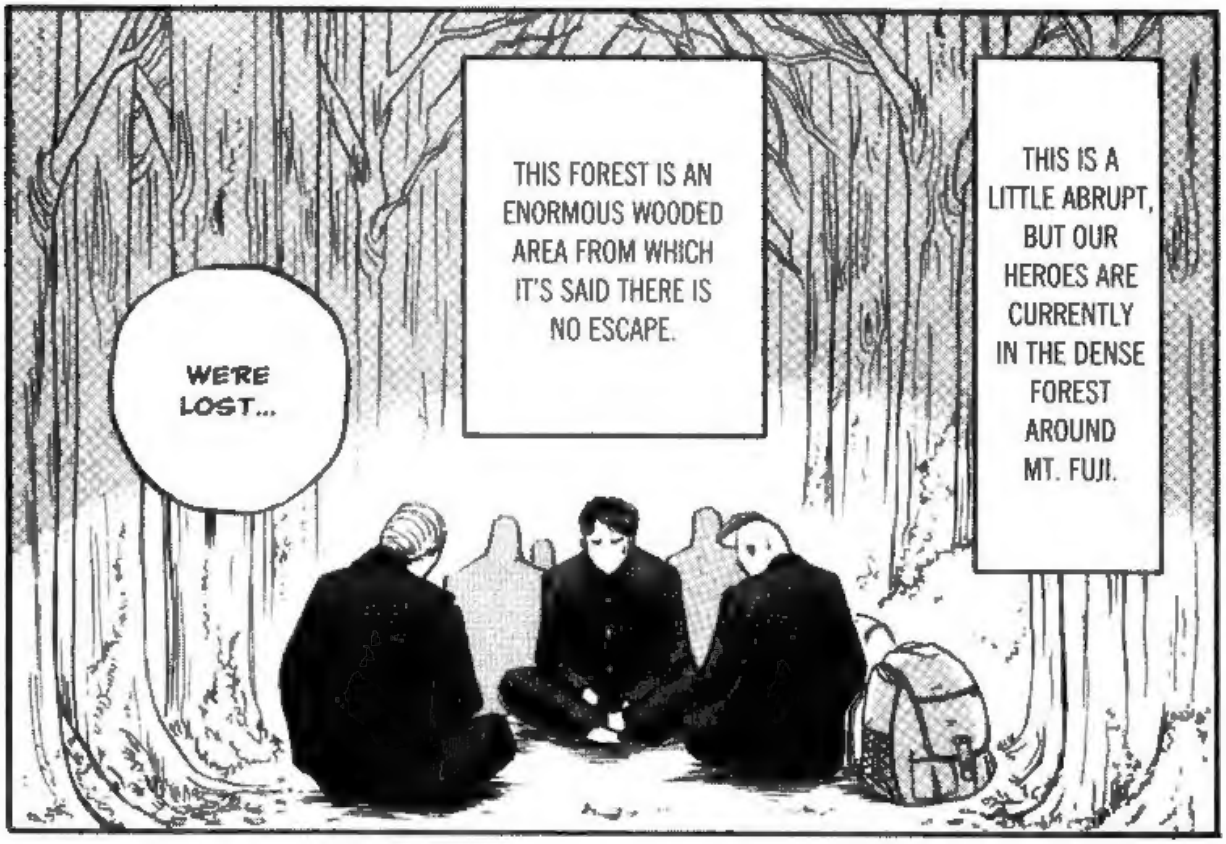
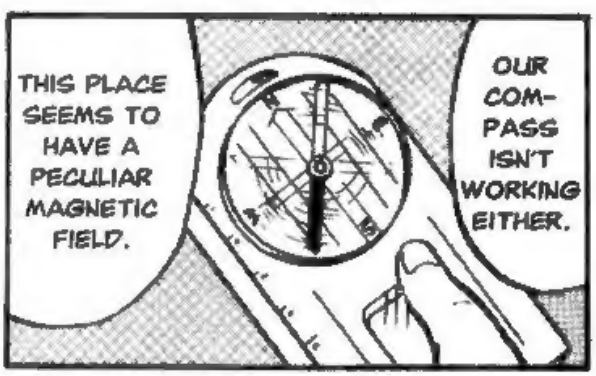
CHAPTER NINETY-SIX: **JUNGLE BOOGIE**


WE'RE LOST...
THIS FOREST IS AN ENORMOUS WOODED AREA FROM WHICH IT'S SAID THERE IS NO ESCAPE.
THIS IS A LITTLE ABRUPT, BUT OUR HEROES ARE CURRENTLY IN THE DENSE FOREST AROUND MT. FUJI.



HOW COULD THIS HAVE BECOME SUCH A PREDICAMENT?
WHAT A MESS. AND TO THINK THAT JUST TWO DAYS AGO WE'D COME TO MT. FUJI FOR A BASEBALL TRAINING CAMP.

LISTENING TO AN IDIOT LIKE YOU MAKES US JUST AS STUPID, THOUGH.
HEY! IS THAT "SOMEONE" SUPPOSED TO BE ME?!

WE SHOULD'VE GOTTEN A HOTEL OR SOMETHING... BUT NO, **SOMEONE** HAD TO SUGGEST IT'D BE CHEAPER TO CAMP!

LIKE I CARE! BESIDES, THIS GUY'S NUTHIN' BUT TALK.
C'MON, MAEDA! YOU'RE TAKING THIS TOO FAR!

FINE, I GET IT! YOU WANT ME TO APOLOGIZE WITH MY **LIFE**, RIGHT? WELL, IF THAT'S WHAT IT'LL TAKE TO MAKE YOU HAPPY...

OH, SHUT UP AND DIE ALREADY!
WHAT?! YOU WANT SOME OF THIS, DO YA?!

WE'RE ALL HUNGRY, AND IT'S MAKING US ON EDGE. WE SHOULD GET SOME-THING TO EAT.
I'M SORRY. NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR US TO BE ACTIN' LIKE THIS, HUH?

STOP IT, YOU TWO! FIGHTING IS JUST A WASTE OF ENERGY!

WE SHOULD STILL HAVE SOME CANNED RATIONS. I SUPPOSE WE'LL HAVE TO OPEN THEM UP.
BUT WE'VE BEEN LOST FOR THREE DAYS! DO WE EVEN HAVE ANY FOOD LEFT?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IT'S BEEN A WHOLE DAY SINCE I'VE EATEN ANYTHING.
NOT TO WORRY.
BUT DO WE HAVE A CAN OPENER?
IT'S BETTER THAN US REVERTING TO SAVAGES.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT? IT'S THE LAST OF OUR FOOD!
WELL DONE, MAEDA. YOU'VE KEPT YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU EVEN IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY. I'VE UNDERESTIMATED YOU.
NORMALLY IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS ONE WOULD HAVE CANNED FOOD BUT NO CAN OPENER. IT'S AN ALL-TOO-COMMON OCCURRENCE.
IF WE PANIC NOW IT'LL BE THE END OF US. WE NEED TO PLAN OUR MOVES CALMLY AND CAREFULLY.
キコ
SKRNK
SKRNK
WELL, NOT TO BRAG, BUT I NEVER LOSE MY COOL, NO MATTER WHAT I'M UP AGAINST.

THESE ARE THE RATIONS! THESE!
WHAT?!
TH-THAT'S NOT A CAN OF RATIONS!
meka-lotta...

SO WE'RE JUST GONNA DIE HERE?!

AND THE AIR IN THE FOREST GREW COLDER AND QUIETER.
THE SUN SET...

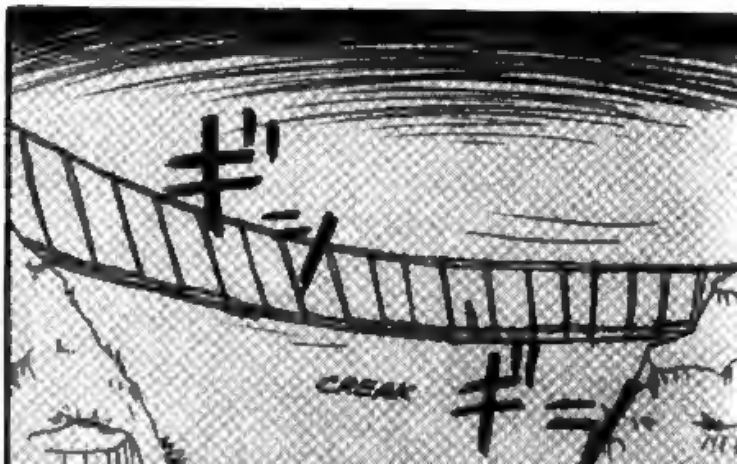
. . . . . .

SUCH AS?
THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS I STILL WANTED TO DO!

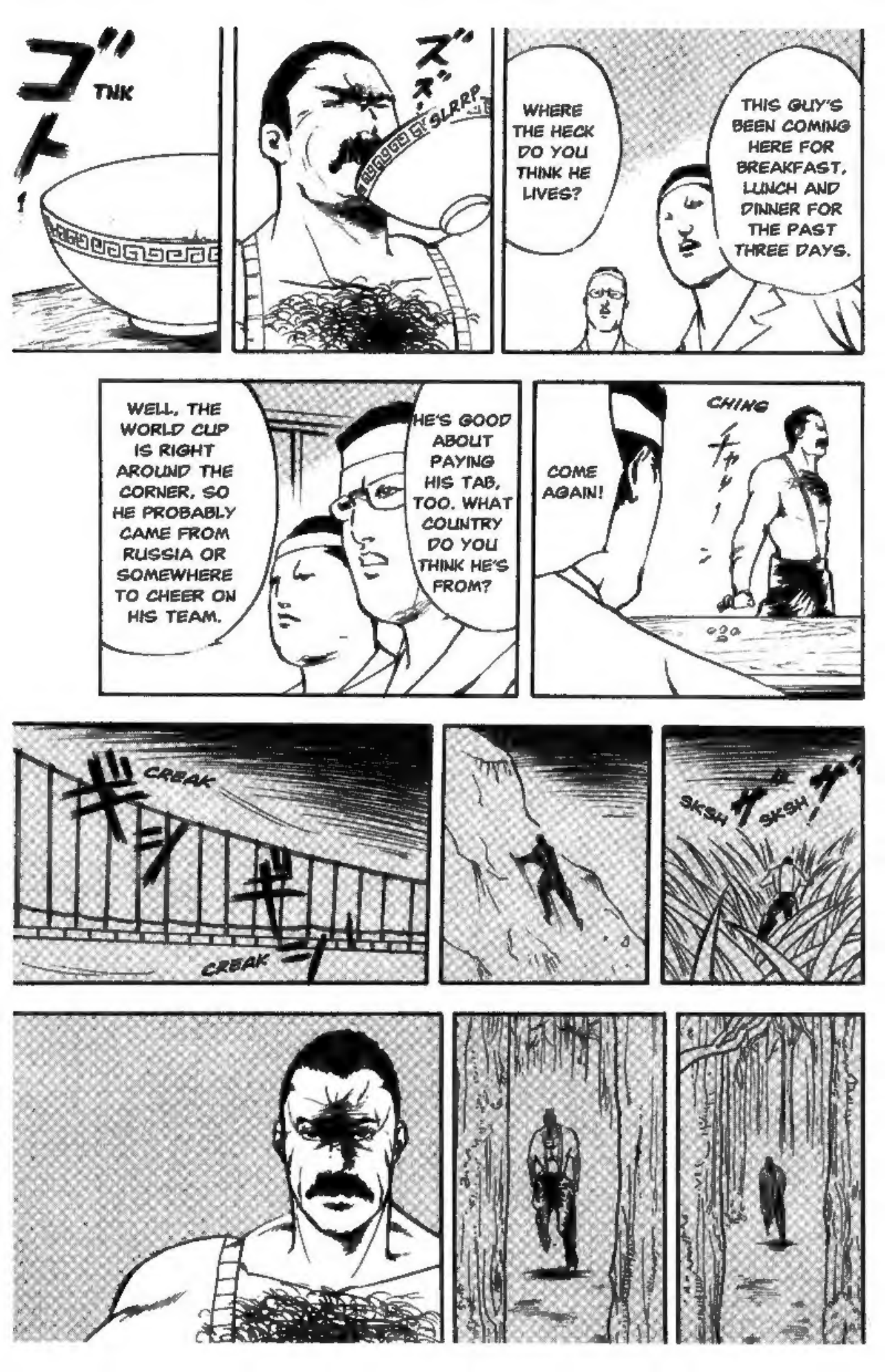
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WE'RE ALL JUST 16! AND THIS IS HOW WE'RE GONNA MEET OUR ENDS?

IT'S OK. THERE'S NO NEED TO FORCE YOURSELF TO THINK OF SOMETHING.
WELL... UH...

CREAK


CREAK

SWISH
OPEN 24 HOURS
RAMEN
ラーメン
LET'S SEE... LARGE RAMEN AGAIN?
HELLO, WELCOME!
WEL-COME!
¥100 RAMEN
53cm
ANZA
46cm


TNK
SLRRP
WHERE THE HECK DO YOU THINK HE LIVES?
THIS GUY'S BEEN COMING HERE FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS.
WELL, THE WORLD CUP IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, SO HE PROBABLY CAME FROM RUSSIA OR SOMEWHERE TO CHEER ON HIS TEAM.
HE'S GOOD ABOUT PAYING HIS TAB, TOO. WHAT COUNTRY DO YOU THINK HE'S FROM?
CHING
COME AGAIN!
CREAK
CREAK
SKSH
SKSH

SAY SOMETHING!

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

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— IGN.com

Lost in the woods near Mount Fuji, the hoodlums from Cromartie High are quickly losing hope. Luckily, Freddie finds a remote ramen shop and Maeda stumbles across a convenience store—but Freddie doesn't share his discovery with his starving classmates, and Maeda brings back some instant ramen without any hot water! Thank goodness there's a gorilla who's smart enough to rescue them...

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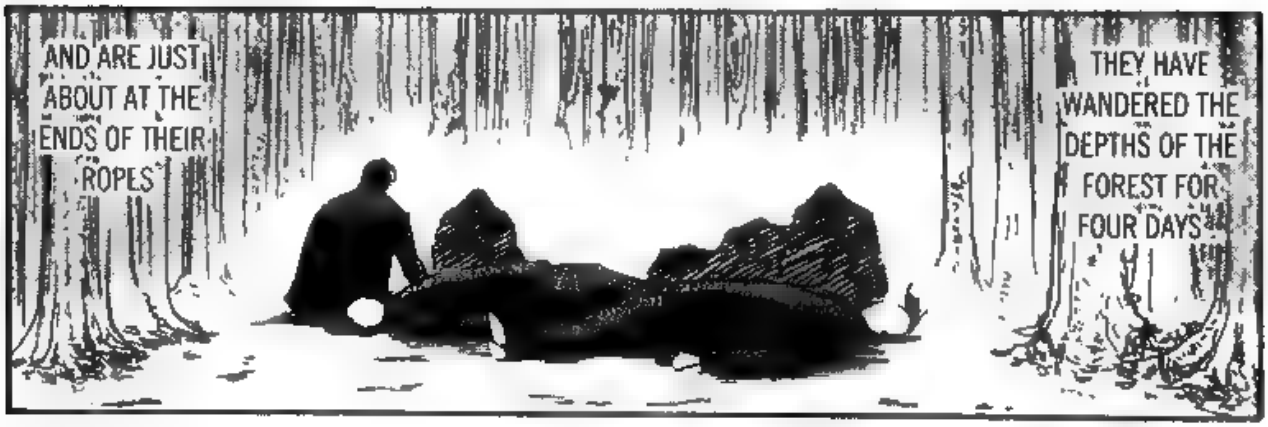
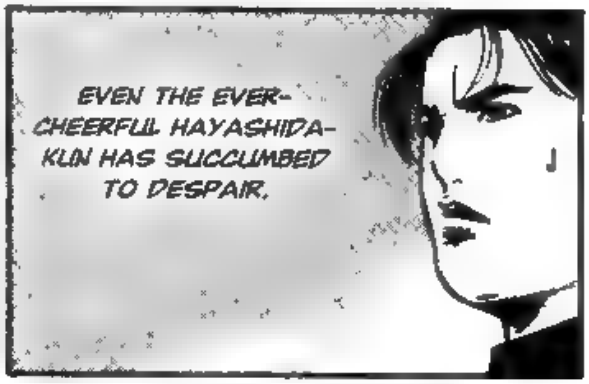
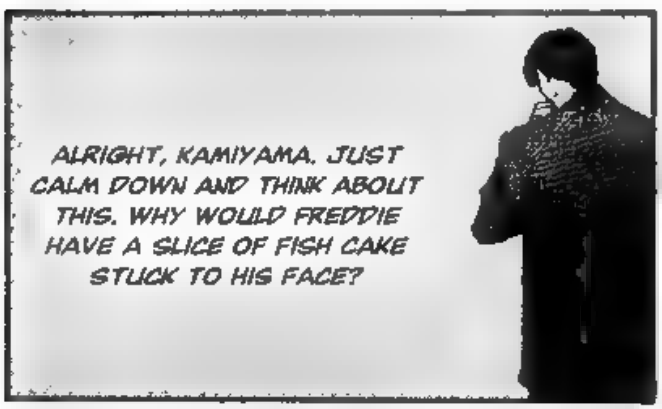
VOL.5

Eiji Nonaka

CHAPTER NINETY-SEVEN: **DEAD OR ALIVE**






ALRIGHT, KAMIYAMA. JUST CALM DOWN AND THINK ABOUT THIS. WHY WOULD FREDDIE HAVE A SLICE OF FISH CAKE STUCK TO HIS FACE?

IS THAT... NARUTO?!

TRULY, THESE WOODS ABOUND WITH MYSTERIES TO TEST THE IMAGINATION.
NARUTO?

UH...THERE'S A PIECE OF NARUTO ON [redacted]'S FACE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

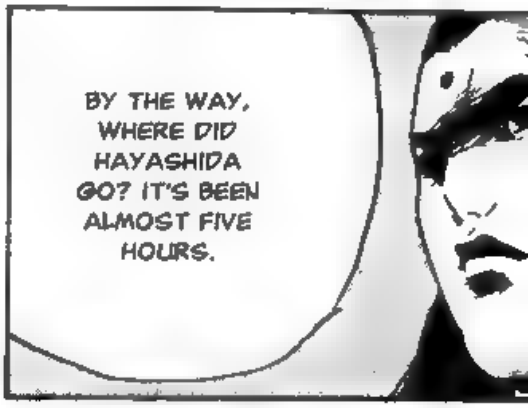
AND WHAT'S THAT?
LOOKING AT THAT NARUTO, I CAN DRAW BUT ONE CONCLUSION.
UH, EVEN IF THERE WERE, IT WOULDN'T BE NARUTO.
MAKES SENSE TO ME!
THERE IS FOOD SOMEWHERE IN THIS FOREST!
AND WENT ABOUT THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF FOOD
THJS, EVERYONE SPL T UP!
SO WHAT HAVE WE GATHERED?
NICE WORK, EVERYBODY.

I FIGURED THAT'S ABOUT ALL WE'D FIND.
THAT'S EVERYTHING, HUH?

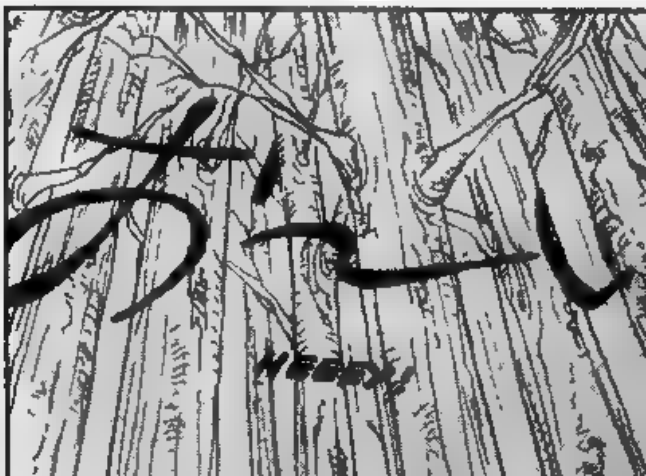
AND A FEW ODD-LOOKING MUSH-ROOMS.
ACORNS, PINE-CONES, WEEDS...

THESE WOODS ARE FILLED WITH MYSTERIES...
YES, THAT IS ODD.
THEN WHERE THE HECK DID FREDDIE GET THAT NARUTO?!
I think he went into town and ate some ramen.

DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.
HOPE HE'S STILL ALIVE...
I THINK HE FELT KINDA RESPONSIBLE, SO HE'S [redacted] REALLY HARD.


BY THE WAY, WHERE DID HAYASHIDA GO? IT'S BEEN ALMOST FIVE HOURS.

HM?



!!
HEEEY!
IT'S HAYASHIDA-KUN!
TH-THAT'S...
HAYASHIDA-KUN! YOU'RE ALRIGHT!
IT'S ME! HAYASHIDA!

I GOT US THE GOODS!
YES! WAY TO GO, HAYASHIDA-KUN!
HUH?
CONVENIENCE STORE

WHOA! THAT'S ROUGH!
NAH, I HAD TO WALK THREE HOURS THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH TO GET THERE.

THEY REALLY DO HAVE CONVENIENCE STORES EVERYWHERE THESE DAYS, DON'T THEY?

YOU'RE RIGHT. SORRY.
WHY WOULD I REMEMBER SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT?! THIS IS LIFE-AND-DEATH TIME, MAN! JEEZ!

WHAT CONVENIENCE STORE WAS IT? LAWSON? 7-11?

IF YOU MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO A CONVENIENCE STORE, COULDN'T YOU HAVE GOTTEN US SOME HELP WHILE YOU WERE AT IT?
SURE.
HEY, HAYASHIDA, CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION?
YOU ACTUALLY THINK I COULD LEAVE YOU ALL BEHIND AND GO OFF ON MY OWN?!
COME AGAIN?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? WE'RE BUDS, AREN'T WE?
I N D E E D !
IN ANY CASE, THIS HAS BOUGHT US A LITTLE MORE TIME.
I LOVE YOU, MAN!
HAYA-SHIDA...
Uh...
NO WAY! I GOT BACK HERE AS FAST AS I COULD!
WE SHOULD JUST BE THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE FOOD.
S-SORRY. I GUESS IT WAS A LITTLE MUCH TO ASK.
DUDE, I HAD TO CLAW THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH ON MY HANDS AND KNEES! THERE'S NO WAY I COULD FIND MY WAY BACK!
STILL, I'D KINDA LIKE TO SEE THAT STORE, TOO. WHERE IS IT?

YOU'RE ALL MISSING THE FRICKIN' POINT!
YES, WHY MUST YOU BE SO INCON-SIDERATE?
GOOD GRIEF! HOW COULD YOU FORGET SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT?!
ARGH! I FORGOT!
We're gonna starve!

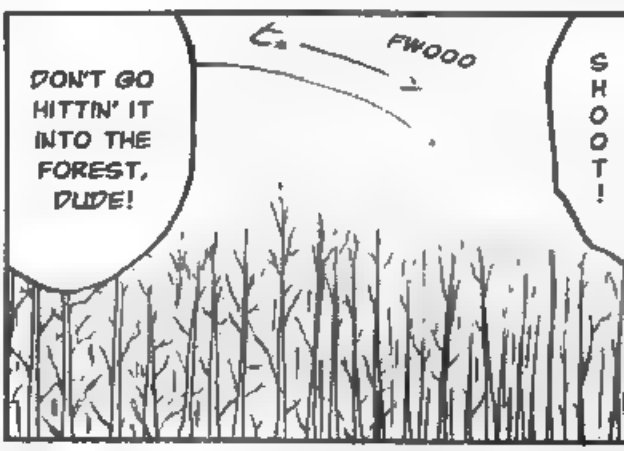
AND WHAT ABOUT THE CHOPSTICKS?

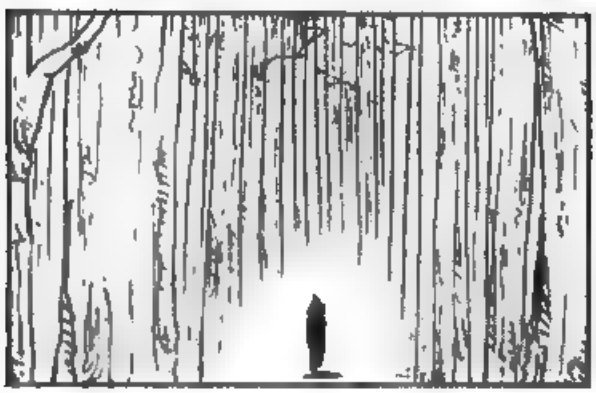
CHAPTER NINETY-EIGHT: **THE JOSHUA TREE**

ALL MY HOPES AND DREAMS ARE GONE...
IT IS NOW THEIR FIFTH DAY IN THE WOODS.
DIDN'T WE ALL HAVE A DREAM OF MAKING IT TO THE KOSHIEN BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS? DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THOSE ASPIRATIONS!
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, HAYA-SHIDA-KUN?!
IT IS?
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT!
EXACTLY. AND IF WE GIVE UP ON THAT DREAM, WE'VE LOST! WE MUST PLAY BASEBALL!
YOU'RE RIGHT! WE CAME HERE TO PLAY BALL!
FWSSH
YEAH!
LET'S DO IT!

CRACK

I'LL GO GET IT.
THAT WAS OUR ONLY BALL.


DON'T GO HITTIN' IT INTO THE FOREST, DUDE!
FWOOO
SHOOT!



CREAK

CREAK

AH!
SKSH
SKSH
ラーメン
HEY, MISTER!
THMP
THMP
TH-THERE'S SOMEONE DOWN THERE!
SURE
COULD YOU HAND ME THAT BALL?
HM?

I HAPPENED TO RUN INTO THIS TOTALLY NICE OLDER DUDE WHO RUNS A RAMEN SHOP.

SO ANYHOW...
FIVE HOURS LATER, HAYASHIDA SAFELY MADE IT BACK FROM THE RAMEN SHOP

UM...CAN I PUT IN A WORD HERE?
I GUESS THERE ARE STILL GOOD PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD AFTER ALL.

. . . . . .

OH! YOU'RE RIGHT!

WHY DIDN'T YOU ASK HIM FOR SOME HELP?!

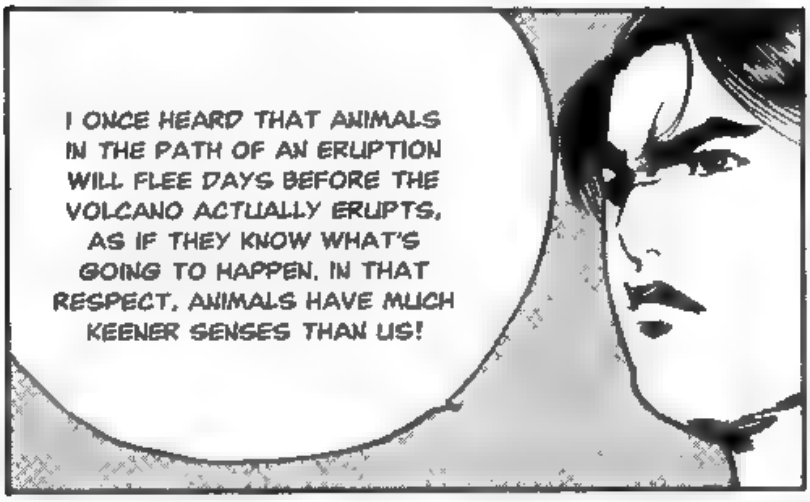
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME SOMETHING, MAEDA...

TALK ABOUT A FOOL ON A FOOL'S ERRAND.
SORRY. I GUESS I KINDA LOST MY COOL.

THAT'S ENOUGH! THIS POINTLESS ARGUING WILL JUST WEAR YOU OUT.
COME TO THINK OF IT, I SHOULD HAVE.
IF MY LOOKING FOR THE BALL WAS SO FOOLISH, WHY DIDN'T YOU GIVE ME ANY CRAP WHEN I WENT LOOKING FOR A CONVENIENCE STORE?!
ALMOST AS IF HE WERE MAKING FUN OF US.
THAT BIRD IS FLYING FREE AND HIGH...
HUH?
TAKE A LOOK UP THERE IN THE SKY.
IT'S SITUATIONS LIKE THIS THAT MAKE YOU REALIZE WHAT POWERLESS CREATURES WE HUMANS ARE.
AN ANIMAL IN THE WILD WOULD FEAR NOTHING IN THIS WOODS--OR ANYWHERE ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER.
WHERE DID HE RUN OFF TO?
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT!
DIDN'T WE HAVE A GORILLA ON OUR TEAM?
WHOA, HANG ON. DID YOU SAY "ANIMALS"?

IS THAT THE WAY OUT?!
HE'S WAVING TO US!

WHOA!
HEY, LOOK!

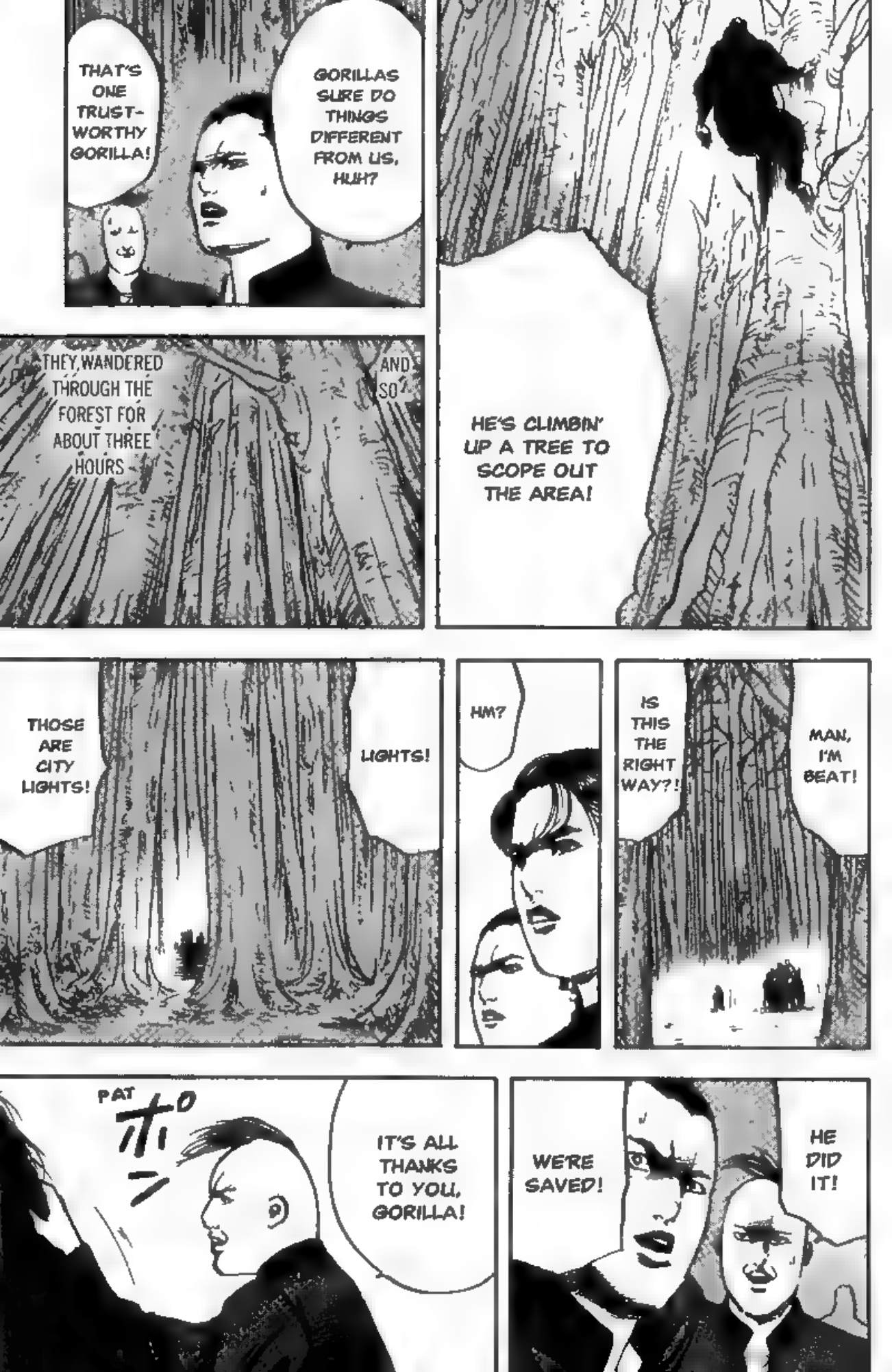

I ONCE HEARD THAT ANIMALS IN THE PATH OF AN ERUPTION WILL FLEE DAYS BEFORE THE VOLCANO ACTUALLY ERUPTS, AS IF THEY KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. IN THAT RESPECT, ANIMALS HAVE MUCH KEENER SENSES THAN US!

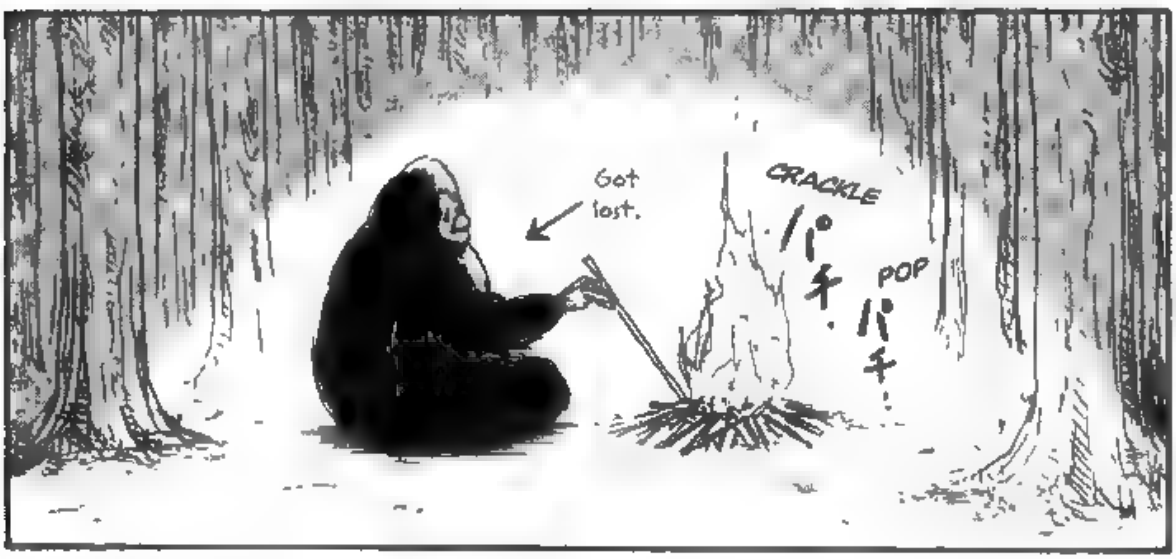
IT'S AL-RIGHT!
BUT... DO YOU THINK WE CAN TRUST IT?

DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF IT!
IT'S MOVING SO FAST...

YEAH!
ALRIGHT, GUYS! FOLLOW THAT GORILLA!

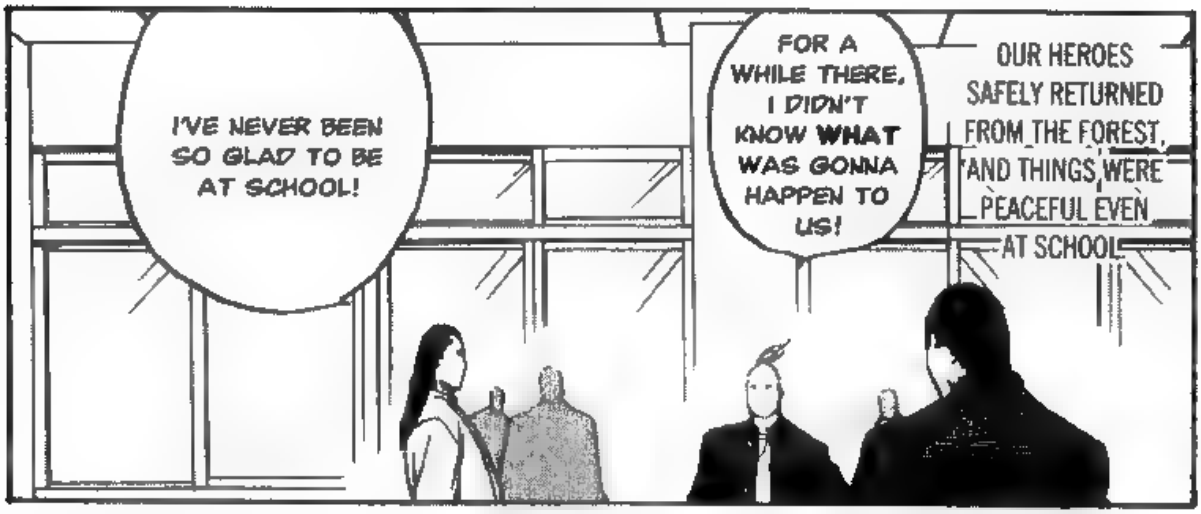
LOOK!
WHOA!


THAT'S ONE TRUST-WORTHY GORILLA!
GORILLAS SURE DO THINGS DIFFERENT FROM US, HUH?
HE'S CLIMBIN' UP A TREE TO SCOPE OUT THE AREA!
THEY WANDERED THROUGH THE FOREST FOR ABOUT THREE HOURS
AND SO
THOSE ARE CITY LIGHTS!
LIGHTS!
HM?
IS THIS THE RIGHT WAY?!
MAN, I'M BEAT!
PAT
IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, GORILLA!
WE'RE SAVED!
HE DID IT!

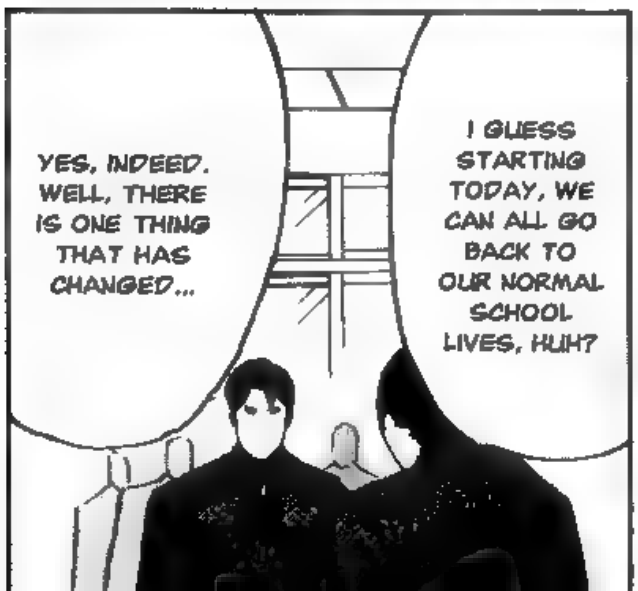


IT HAS A FLOWER IN ITS HAIR.

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE: **BEAT IT**


I'VE NEVER BEEN SO GLAD TO BE AT SCHOOL!
FOR A WHILE THERE, I DIDN'T KNOW **WHAT** WAS GONNA HAPPEN TO US!
OUR HEROES SAFELY RETURNED FROM THE FOREST, AND THINGS WERE PEACEFUL EVEN AT SCHOOL.

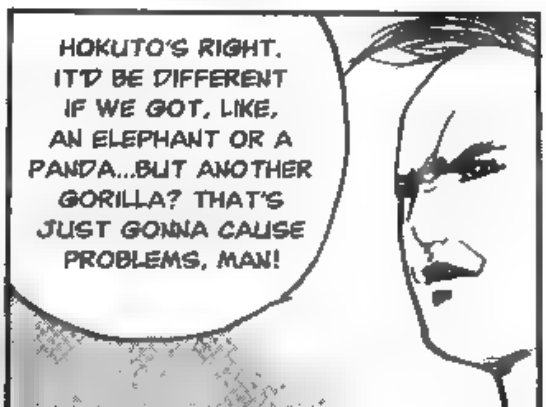
WHAT'S MORE, I FEEL THAT THIS EXPERIENCE WILL ADD A SENSE OF FULFILLMENT TO OUR EVERYDAY LIVES.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE'RE ALL SAFE AND SOUND.

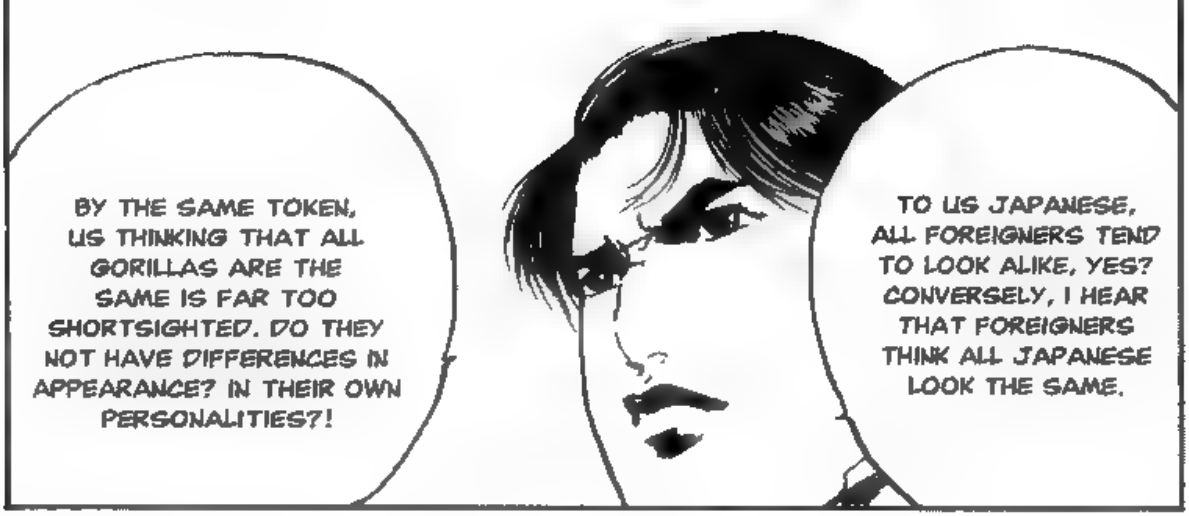

YES, INDEED. WELL, THERE IS ONE THING THAT HAS CHANGED...
I GUESS STARTING TODAY, WE CAN ALL GO BACK TO OUR NORMAL SCHOOL LIVES, HUH?

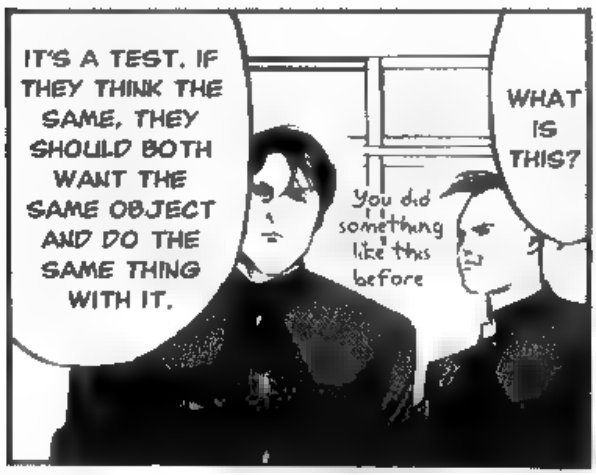
OOGA?
WE HAVE ANOTHER GORILLA NOW.

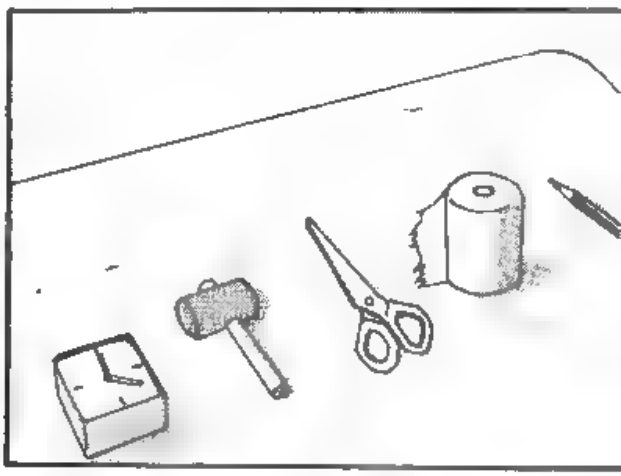
I'VE JUST ABOUT HAD IT WITH THIS SCHOOL...
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
NO KIDDING. I MEAN, WHAT'S THE POINT?
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH **TWO** GORILLAS? ONE WAS PLENTY.

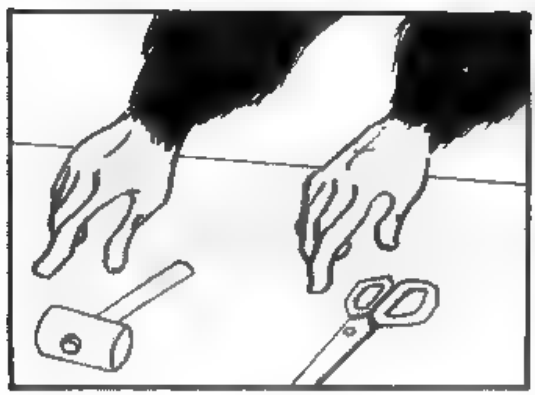
NAH, THEY'RE THE SAME DAMN THING!
THIS GORILLA'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT, THOUGH.

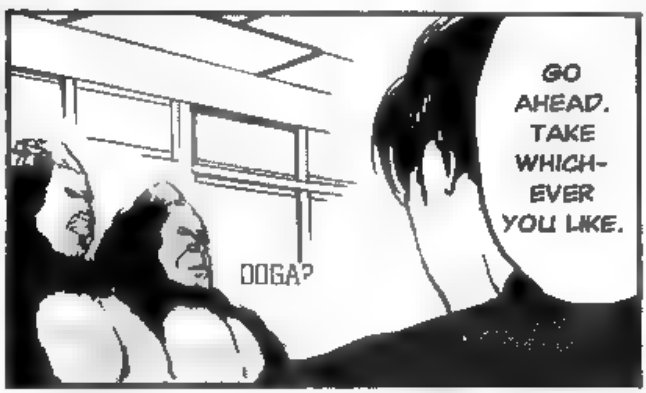

HOKUTO'S RIGHT. IT'D BE DIFFERENT IF WE GOT, LIKE, AN ELEPHANT OR A PANDA...BUT ANOTHER GORILLA? THAT'S JUST GONNA CAUSE PROBLEMS, MAN!


BY THE SAME TOKEN, US THINKING THAT ALL GORILLAS ARE THE SAME IS FAR TOO SHORTSIGHTED. DO THEY NOT HAVE DIFFERENCES IN APPEARANCE? IN THEIR OWN PERSONALITIES?!
TO US JAPANESE, ALL FOREIGNERS TEND TO LOOK ALIKE, YES? CONVERSELY, I HEAR THAT FOREIGNERS THINK ALL JAPANESE LOOK THE SAME.


IT'S A TEST. IF THEY THINK THE SAME, THEY SHOULD BOTH WANT THE SAME OBJECT AND DO THE SAME THING WITH IT.
You did something like this before
WHAT IS THIS?






GO AHEAD. TAKE WHICH-EVER YOU LIKE.
OOGA?

THEY'RE BOTH GORILLAS, BUT THEY TOOK DIFFERENT THINGS!

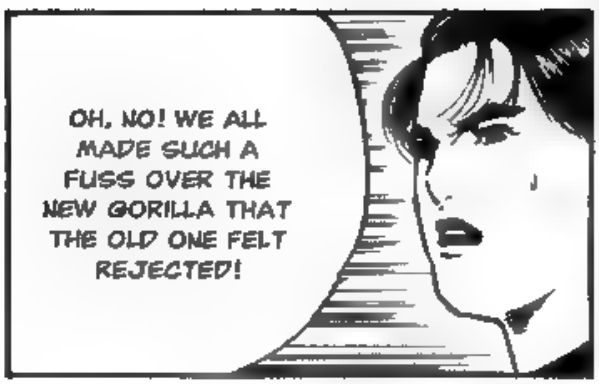
WHOA! THEY TOOK DIF-FERENT THINGS!
HUH?!

ANOTHER FINE IDEA.

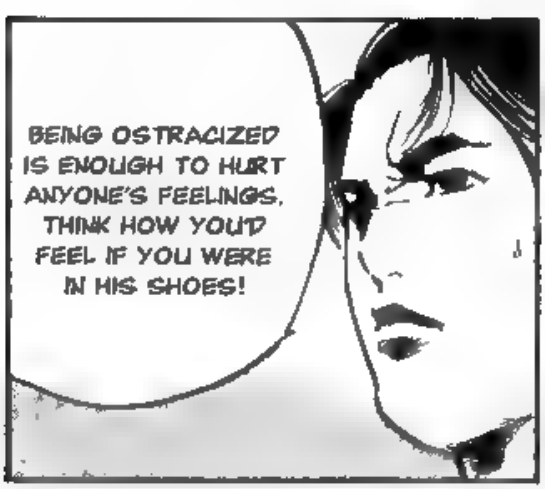
CHAPTER 100: **A BRAND-NEW GORILLA**

THOUGH IT MAY BE SOMETHING OF A RISK, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ACCEPT NEW PEOPLE. IF WE ALWAYS JUST PLAY IT SAFE, WE'LL LOSE OUR WILL TO CHALLENGE THE UNKNOWN--WE WILL CEASE TO GROW!
Newcomers?
IF WE AFFORD PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT SOLELY TO THOSE WE'RE "USED TO," WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO ACCEPT NEWCOMERS INTO OUR GROUP.

NO KIDDING. THERE'S NOTHING INTERESTING ABOUT HITTING A NAIL WITH A **HAMMER!**
HEY, YEAH! IF YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT'S PRETTY DAMN AMAZING!
LOOK CLOSELY. YES, THESE GORILLAS ARE DOING THE SAME THING, BUT NOTE THAT THE NEW ONE IS DOING IT WITH A PAIR OF SCISSORS. IN A WAY, IT'S SHOWING US ITS PERSONALITY!

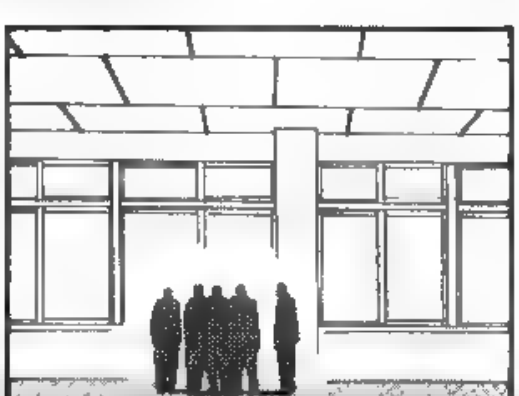

OH, NO! WE ALL MADE SUCH A FUSS OVER THE NEW GORILLA THAT THE OLD ONE FELT REJECTED!

HEY! WHERE YOU GOIN', OLD GORILLA?!
RATTLE

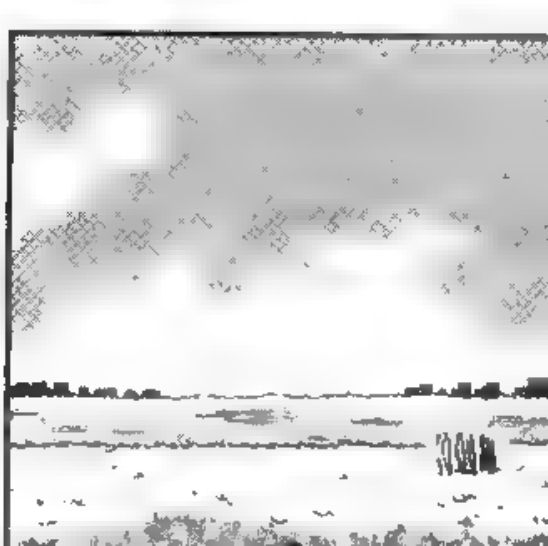

BEING OSTRACIZED IS ENOUGH TO HURT ANYONE'S FEELINGS. THINK HOW YOU'D FEEL IF YOU WERE IN HIS SHOES!

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT ABOUT ONE OF OUR FRIENDS?!
GOOD. SAVES US THE TIME IT'D TAKE TO KICK HIS ASS OUT.
Friends?

YEAH... C'MON, LET'S GO FIND HIM!
YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT WAS PRETTY CARELESS OF US.



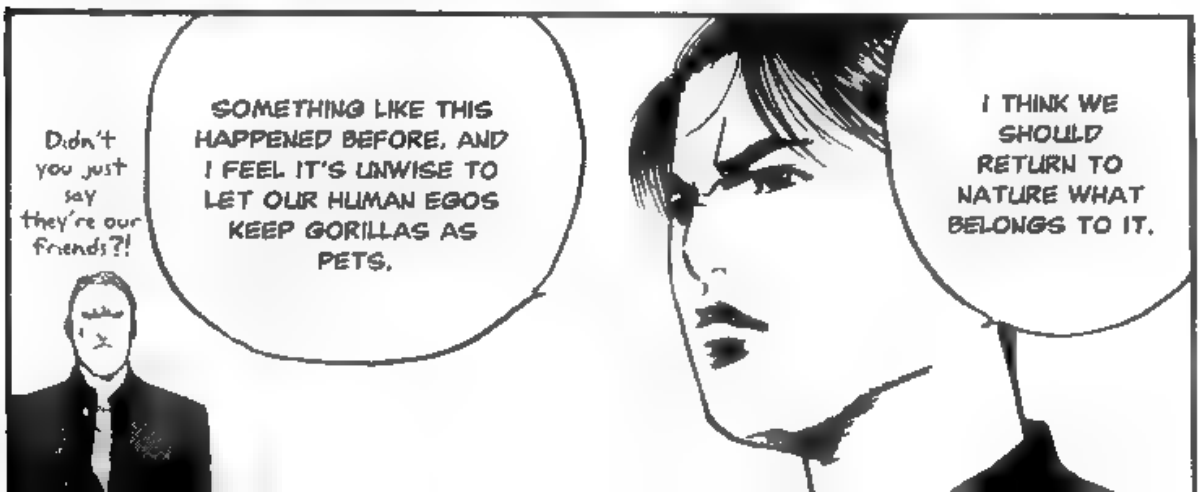
HE CERTAINLY DID SEEM RATHER SHOCKED...
WHAT IF HE, LIKE, DROWNED HIMSELF IN THE RIVER?
WHERE ARE YOU, OLD GORILLA?



HE'S THROWIN' ROCKS INTO THE WATER!
SPLSH
AH! THERE HE IS!
SWISH
WHAT IS IT, FREDDIE?
EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW.
ARE YOU STILL FEELING DOWN ABOUT BEFORE?
WAIT. LET ME GO FIRST. WE SHOULDN'T GIVE HIM TOO MUCH EXCITEMENT ALL AT ONCE.
LET'S GO, GUYS.
YEAH. CAN YA FORGIVE US?
WE SPOKE WITHOUT THINKING... I'M SORRY.
I UNDERSTAND THAT WE HURT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT WE REALIZE NOW THAT WE WERE WRONG.
PAT
C'MON. DON'T LET THIS BRING YOU DOWN!
YOU SEE? WE ALL LIKE YOU. YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?

GO FOR IT, OLD GORILLA.

CHAPTER 101: **MISS YOU**

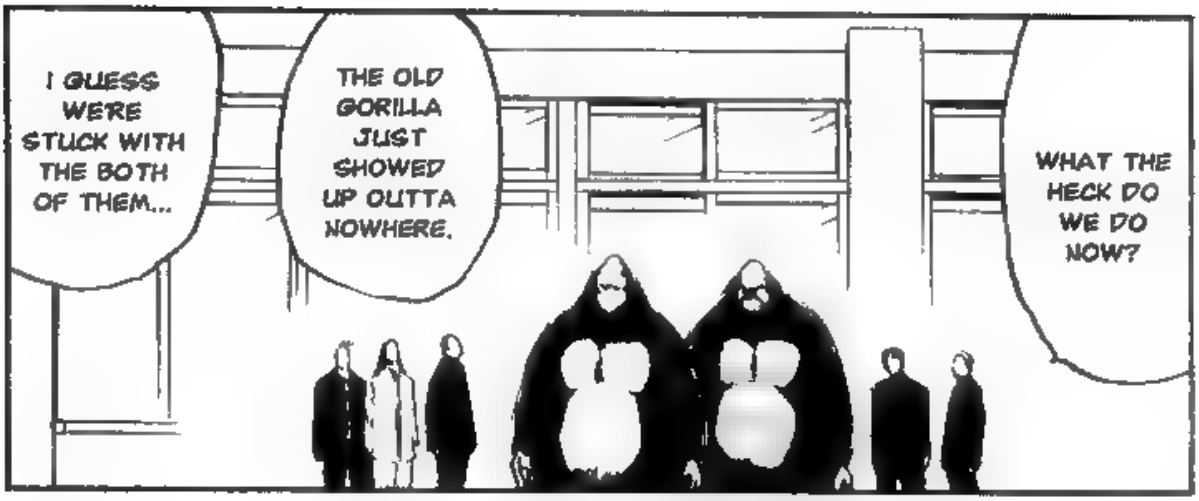

Didn't you just say they're our friends?!
SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED BEFORE, AND I FEEL IT'S UNWISE TO LET OUR HUMAN EGOS KEEP GORILLAS AS PETS.
I THINK WE SHOULD RETURN TO NATURE WHAT BELONGS TO IT.

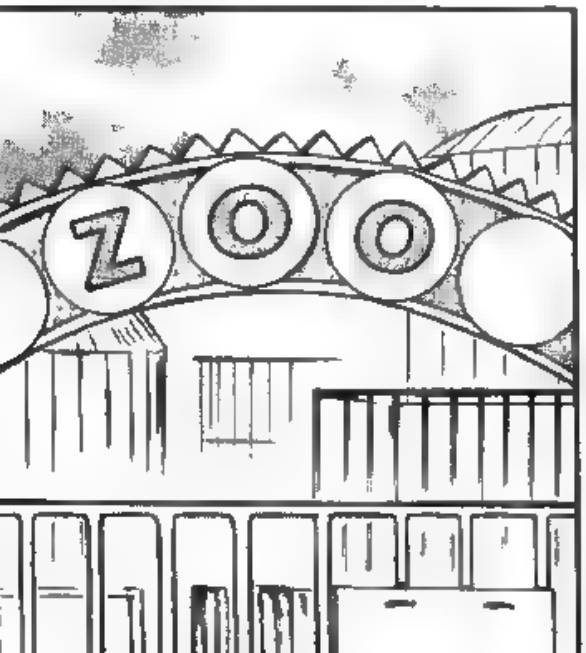
NO, JUST THE NEW ONE. THE OLD GORILLA WAS AT THIS SCHOOL TO BEGIN WITH, SO HE MIGHT FEEL OUT OF PLACE IN NATURE.
SO YOU WANNA GET RID OF BOTH GORILLAS?
I THINK THE ZOO SHOULD BE FINE FOR NOW. IT MAY NOT BE TRUE "NATURE," BUT IT'S BETTER THAN THE SCHOOL, DON'T YOU THINK?
ARE WE GOING BACK TO THAT FOREST? I DON'T EVER WANNA GO THERE AGAIN!
YEAH, BUT WHY WOULD A GORILLA EVEN BE AT OUR SCHOOL?! I MEAN, THAT GOES BEYOND WEIRD!
NOD
IS THAT ALRIGHT WITH THE TWO OF YOU?
HE WON'T LIS-TEN...
SOMEHOW, I DOUBT THAT.
HEY, THEY
NOD

SWOOSH
VRMMM
OH...
HAVE A GOOD LIFE!
I KINDA MISS HIM.
I GUESS THAT WAS YOUR FIRST FRIEND...
YOU MISS THE NEW GORILLA, DO YOU?
PAT
DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN...
DON'T WORRY. THE NEW GORILLA WILL BE JUST FINE. WHO KNOWS, MAYBE WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMEDAY.

AND NO, I DON'T RECYCLE THE ART IN MY PANELS.

CHAPTER 102: **ZOO STATION**





YEAH, I BEEN WAITIN' FOR YA!
HELLO. MY NAME IS KAMIYAMA. I CONTACTED YOU EARLIER.
WELL, THIS IS WHERE THE TWO OF YOU PART WAYS. YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
AND WHAT EXACTLY WHAT MAKES A "FINE" GORILLA?
THIS IS ONE FINE GORILLA!
EVEN I CAN'T TELL THEM APART ANYMORE!
KAMIYAMA! THAT'S THE OLD ONE!
I HOPE THAT YOU CAN LIVE HAPPILY HERE, NEW GORILLA.

I THINK THE NEW GORILLA'S GOING TO BE HAPPY THERE.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT HE'S GOT A GOOD CARETAKER.
LOOK! THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THIS IS THE OLD GORILLA!
HEY, BEFORE WE GO ANY FARTHER, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANNA MAKE SURE OF...
HA HA! OF COURSE NOT. YOU'RE SUCH A WORRY-WART!
WE DIDN'T GET THE WRONG GORILLA AGAIN, DID WE?
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, OLD GORILLA?
HONESTLY, HAYASHIDA, WE WOULDN'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE FOUR TIMES IN A ROW!
AH, THAT'S A RELIEF. NOW I CAN RELAX.

THAT CARETAKER'S SURE TO BE PANICKING RIGHT NOW.

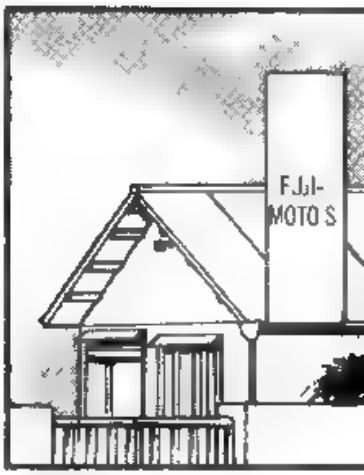
CHAPTER 103: **FRIENDS**

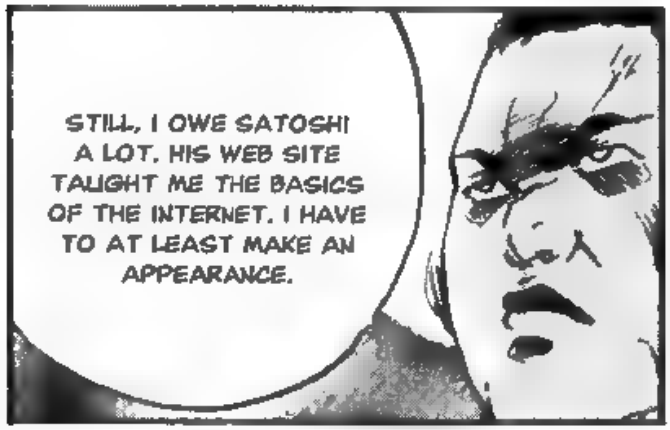
CRACK
WHACK
D-DAMN...
FINISHED.
ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP! NO OPPONENT IS DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER! INSTEAD OF WASTIN' TIME TALKIN' AND TRYING TO STRATEGIZE YOUR FIGHT, JUST WALK UP AND HIT THE BASTARD!
HOW COULD PUNKS LIKE THESE HAVE BEEN GIVIN' YOU TROUBLE? YOU GUYS AREN'T CUT OUT FOR FIGHTING, ARE YOU?
KIICHI FUJIMOTO
LEADER OF MANUEL HIGH'S 1ST YEARS

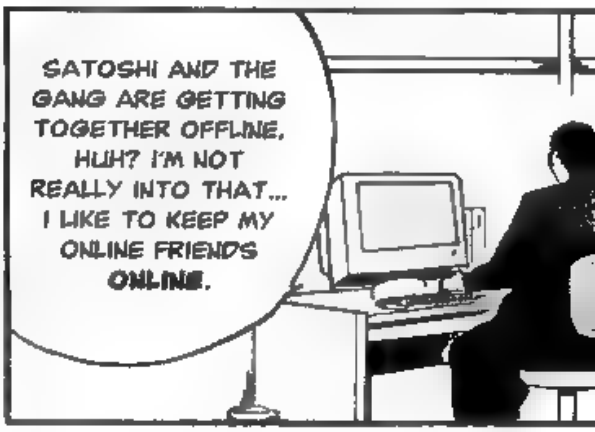
HE'S A MONSTER. HE DON'T SHOW MERCY TO ANYONE!
THAT FUJIMOTO IS ONE SCARY DUDE.

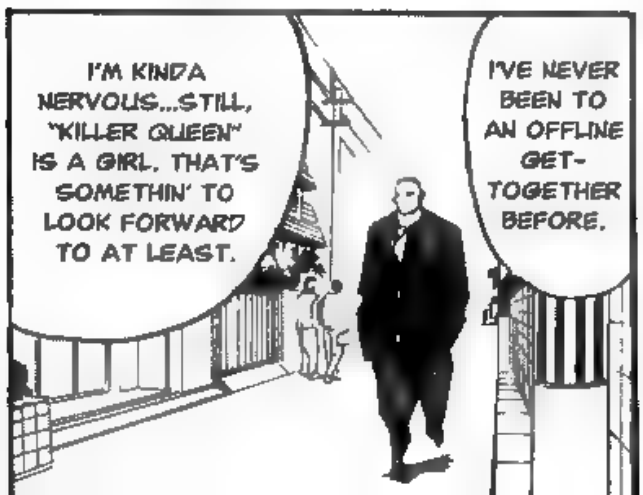
O-OK.
I'M GOIN' HOME. YOU ALL CAN CLEAN UP THIS MESS.

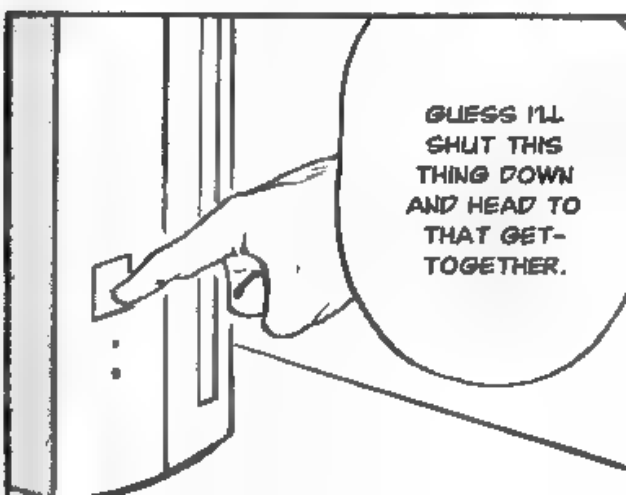
Username: Satoshi
Hey! Let's meet up offline!


FUJI-MOTO S

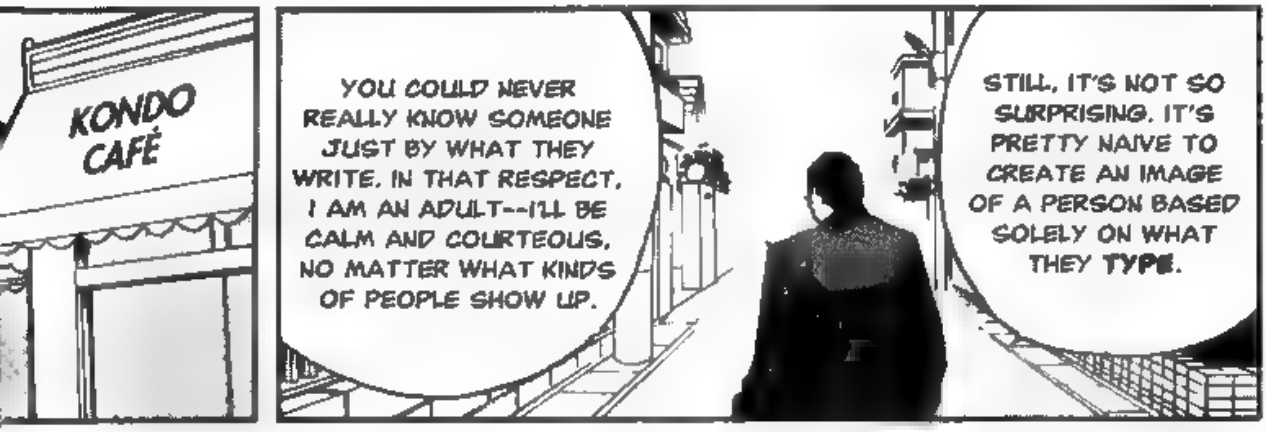

STILL, I OWE SATOSHI A LOT. HIS WEB SITE TAUGHT ME THE BASICS OF THE INTERNET. I HAVE TO AT LEAST MAKE AN APPEARANCE.


SATOSHI AND THE GANG ARE GETTING TOGETHER OFFLINE, HUH? I'M NOT REALLY INTO THAT... I LIKE TO KEEP MY ONLINE FRIENDS ONLINE.


I'M KINDA NERVOUS...STILL, "KILLER QUEEN" IS A GIRL. THAT'S SOMETHIN' TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT LEAST.
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO AN OFFLINE GET-TOGETHER BEFORE.


GUESS I'LL SHUT THIS THING DOWN AND HEAD TO THAT GET-TOGETHER.

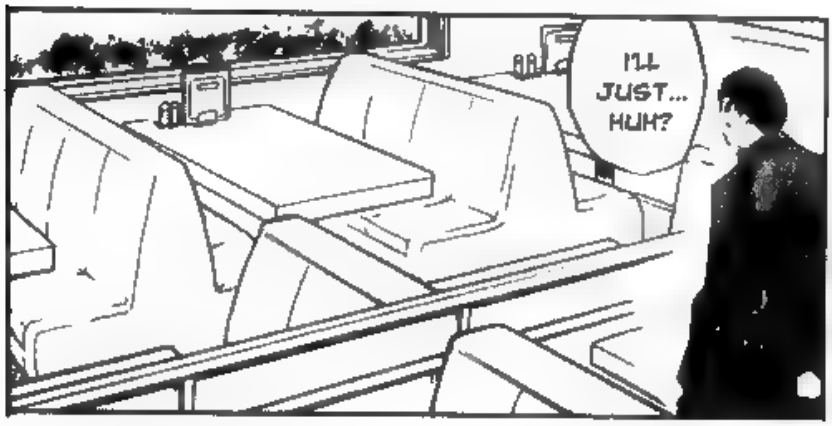
I HEAR A LOT OF STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE WHO SEEM NICE ONLINE BUT ARE PRETTY HORRIBLE IN REAL LIFE. I SHOULD BE READY FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
ONE THING THAT WORRIES ME IS THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THESE PEOPLE ARE REALLY LIKE.


KONDO CAFÉ
YOU COULD NEVER REALLY KNOW SOMEONE JUST BY WHAT THEY WRITE. IN THAT RESPECT, I AM AN ADULT--I'LL BE CALM AND COURTEOUS, NO MATTER WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE SHOW UP.
STILL, IT'S NOT SO SURPRISING. IT'S PRETTY NAIVE TO CREATE AN IMAGE OF A PERSON BASED SOLELY ON WHAT THEY **TYPE**.

I'M HERE TO MEET MY GROUP, "SATOSHI AND THE GANG."
WELCOME, SIR! TABLE FOR ONE?

HELLO, EVERYONE. I'M KIICHI FUJIMOTO. ONLINE, I GO BY "11:00 PM."
WHAT, HERE?
RIGHT HERE, SIR.

HUH?
MENU


I'LL JUST... HUH?

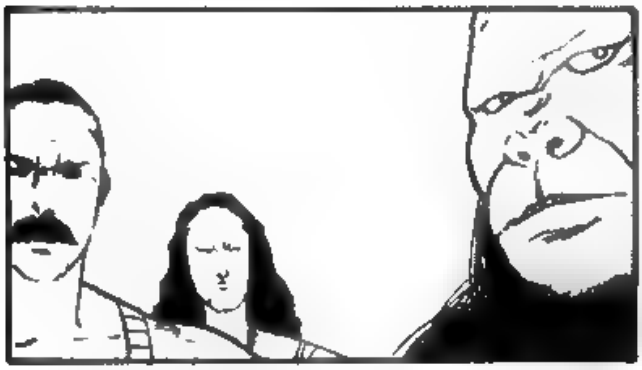
OH, NO! SOMEHOW I SAT AT THE WRONG TABLE. I'M VERY SORRY.

OK, CALM DOWN. COULD THIS REALLY BE THEM? WAIT A MINUTE--WE WERE ALL SUPPOSED TO BRING A ROSE AS A KIND OF PROOF OF WHO WE WERE.

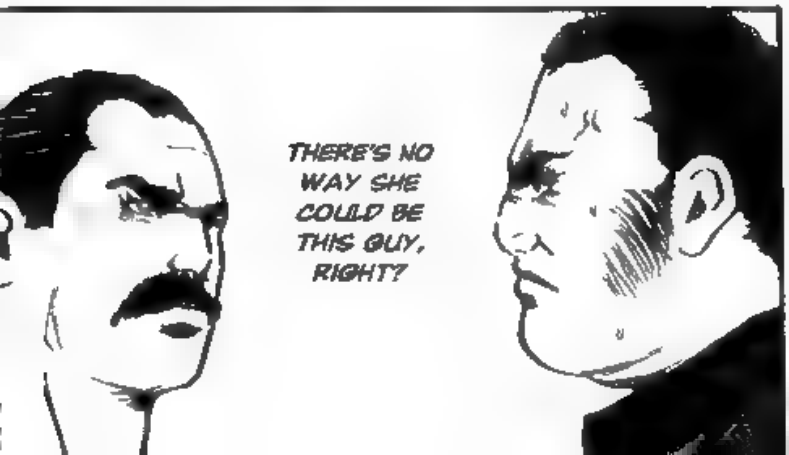
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE HERE!

ROSES!

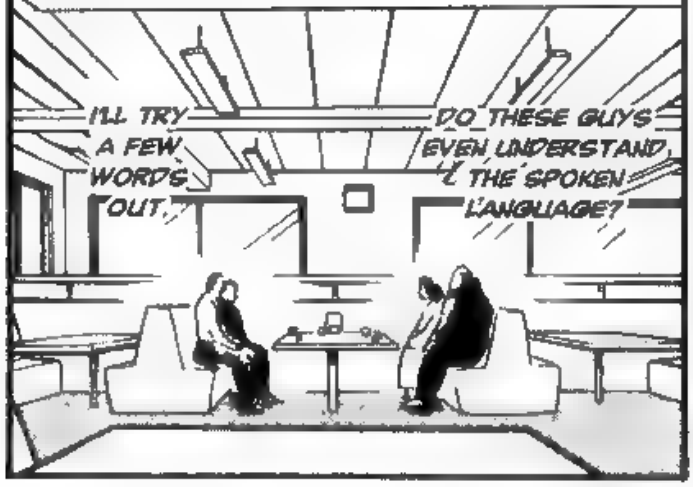
STILL, I CAN'T LET MYSELF GET ALL FLUSTERED. IF I DID, I'D BE SURE TO GET THE "NEWB TREATMENT" FROM YOU ALL, HUH?
I EXPECTED YOU ALL TO LOOK DIFFERENT FROM HOW I IMAGINED WHILE TALKING TO YOU ONLINE...BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE **THIS** DIFFERENT!

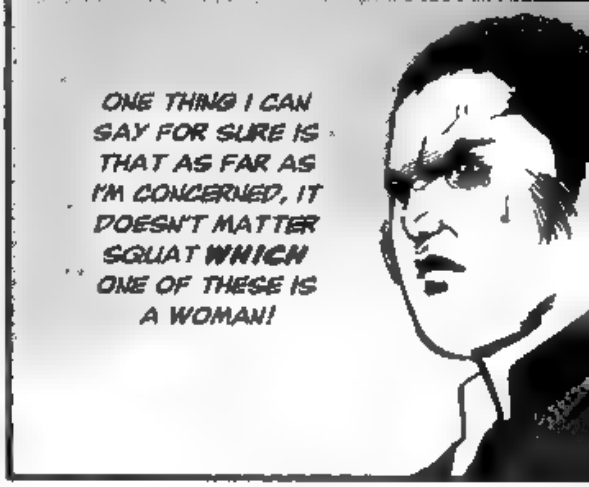


AH, THAT'S RIGHT--KILLER QUEEN SHOULD BE HERE. SHE'S THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE GROUP, SO...


THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD BE THIS GUY, RIGHT?

WHICH ONE IS SHE?


I'LL TRY A FEW WORD'S OUT.
DO THESE GUY'S EVEN UNDERSTAND THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE?

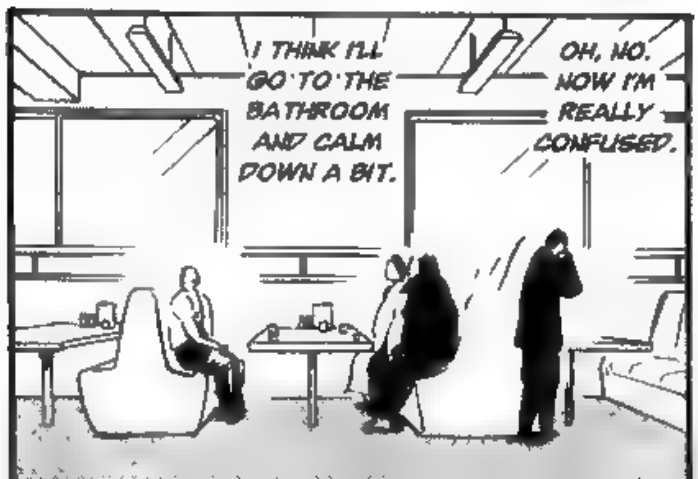

ONE THING I CAN SAY FOR SURE IS THAT AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT DOESN'T MATTER SQUAT WHICH ONE OF THESE IS A WOMAN!

RIVER.

MOUNTAIN.

TWITCH

BANANA.


I THINK I'LL GO TO THE BATHROOM AND CALM DOWN A BIT.
OH, NO. NOW I'M REALLY CONFUSED.

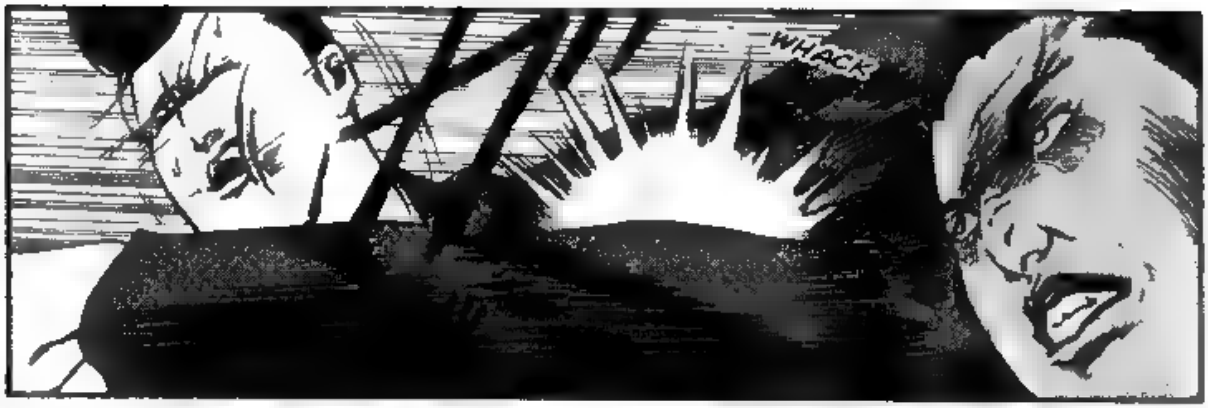
WHAT THE?! HE REACTED! THEY DO UNDERSTAND!

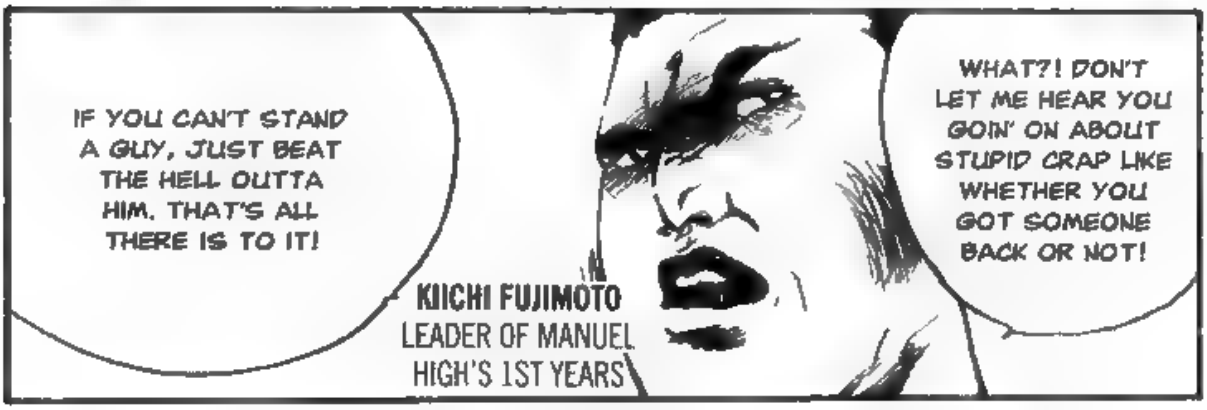
AT LEAST NOW I KNOW I CAN USE SIMPLE WORDS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.
ALRIGHT, GET A GRIP. THINK THIS THING OUT...
TOILET
CREAK
IF THAT'S THE CASE, I CAN ASK THEM DIRECTLY WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS THE "SATOSHI AND THE GANG" MEETING. OK! THAT'S THE FIRST THING I NEED TO DO!
I'M SORRY TO HAVE BEEN SO SHAKEN UP EARLIER.
I'LL JUST SIT BACK DOWN, AND...
AAH, MUCH BETTER.
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I'D LIKE TO GET PERFECTLY CLEAR.
YOU MAY BE SURPRISED THAT A GUY LIKE ME WOULD CHAT ONLINE...
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU UNDERSTAND SIMPLE WORDS, SO I'LL SAY THIS NICE AND SLOW. LISTEN UP.

WHICH ONE OF THEM IS WRITING THIS?!
Username: Satoshi
That was a lot of fun today! Thanks so much for picking up the tab. Next time it's on me!

MAKES YOU WONDER, DOESN'T IT?

CHAPTER 104: **TAKE OFF ME**




IF YOU CAN'T STAND A GUY, JUST BEAT THE HELL OUTTA HIM. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT!
KIICHI FUJIMOTO
LEADER OF MANUEL HIGH'S 1ST YEARS
WHAT?! DON'T LET ME HEAR YOU GOIN' ON ABOUT STUPID CRAP LIKE WHETHER YOU GOT SOMEONE BACK OR NOT!

AGAIN?!
Username: Satoshi
Let's meet up again!

PLUS THEY STUCK ME WITH THE BILL LAST TIME, DAMMIT! I'VE GOTTA MAKE 'EM PAY ME BACK!
I HADN'T PLANNED ON MEETIN' UP WITH THOSE GUYS AGAIN, BUT I GUESS I'M GONNA HAVE TO IF I WANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

STILL, THERE'S SOMETHING BUGGING ME. IF THOSE THREE REALLY WERE "SATOSHI AND THE GANG," WHICH ONE WAS SATOSHI?

THEN I'VE BEEN CHATTING ONLINE WITH A FRICKIN' GORILLA.
IF IT WAS THAT APE, THEN...

I LOOKED UP TO SATOSHI LIKE A TEACHER. IF I'VE BEEN HOLDIN' THAT KIND OF RESPECT FOR A GORILLA... WELL, THAT JUST WOULDN'T BE FUNNY.
AND LEMME TELL YOU, THAT WOULD BE BAD. IT'S A MATTER OF **PRIDE**... MY PRIDE AS A HUMAN!

KONDO CAFÉ

WHATEVER. I WON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT GORILLA FOR NOW. THE OTHERS ARE HUMAN, EVEN IF JUST BARELY. THEY SHOULD AT LEAST BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN SIMPLE WORDS. I'LL SET THINGS STRAIGHT WITH 'EM!

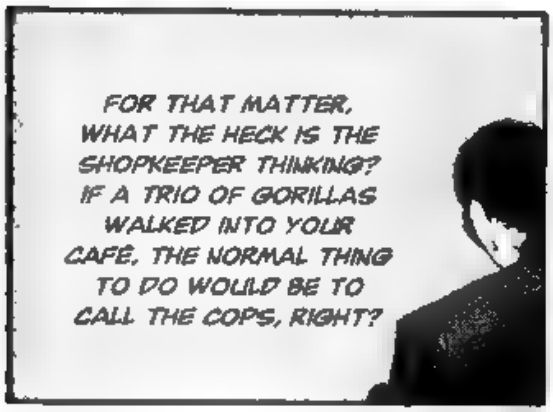
RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR.
I'M HERE TO MEET SATOSHI AND THE GANG.

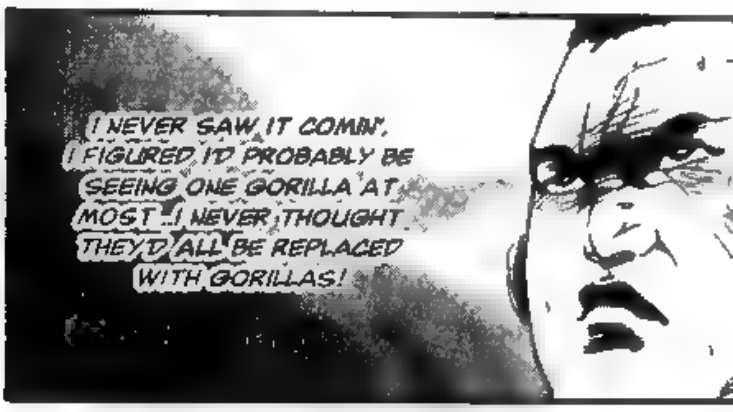
WELCOME, SIR!
CHA-RING

THIS TIME, [illegible] SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO SAY TO YOU ALL.

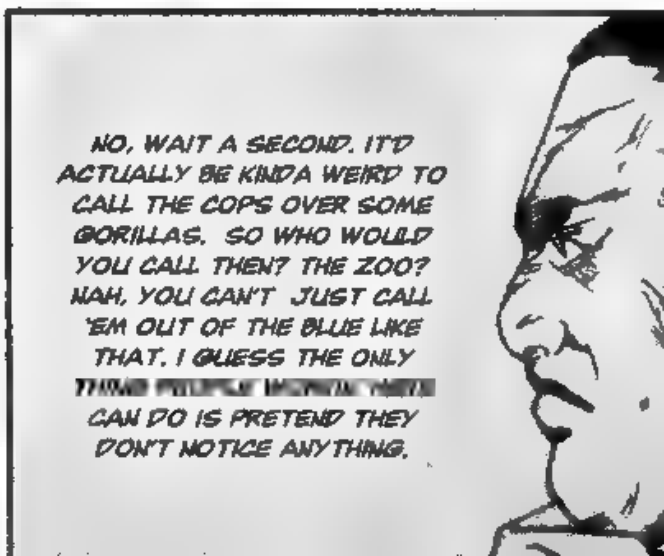
HEY. IT'S ME, KIICHI FUJIMOTO, "11:00 PM."

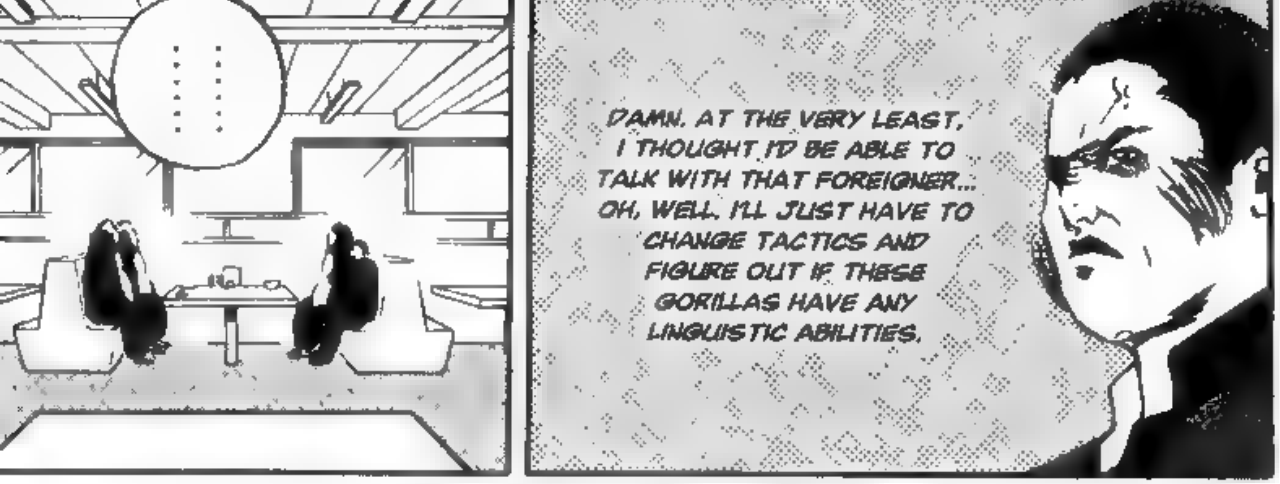
THEY'RE ALL GORILLAS...


FOR THAT MATTER, WHAT THE HECK IS THE SHOPKEEPER THINKING? IF A TRIO OF GORILLAS WALKED INTO YOUR CAFE, THE NORMAL THING TO DO WOULD BE TO CALL THE COPS, RIGHT?


I NEVER SAW IT COMIN'. I FIGURED I'D PROBABLY BE SEEING ONE GORILLA AT MOST...I NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D ALL BE REPLACED WITH GORILLAS!

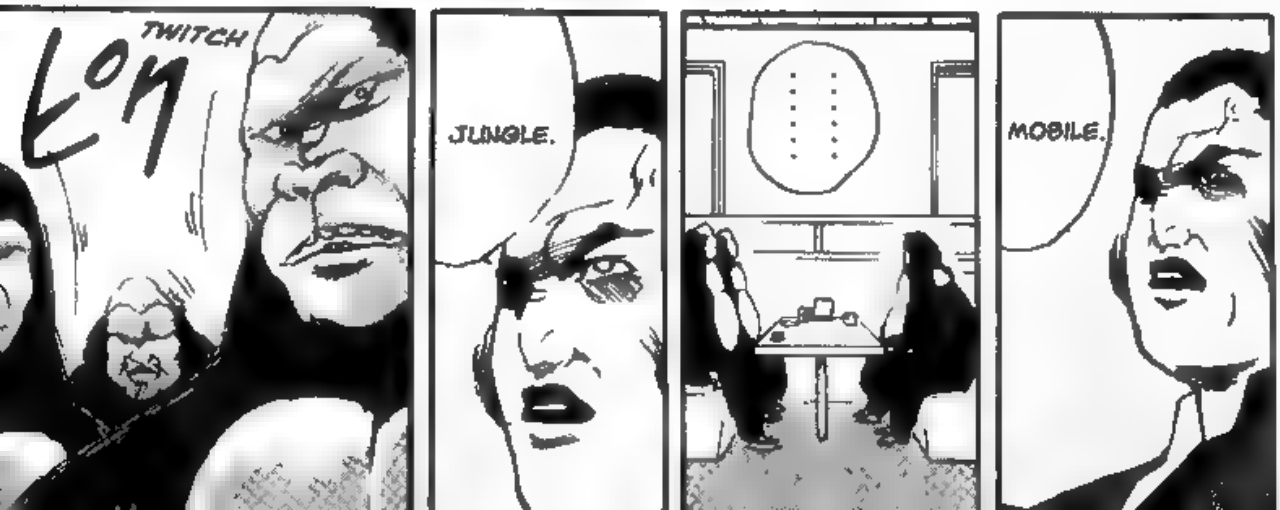
RIGHT NOW, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET THESE GUYS TALKING.
ANYWAY, WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?!


NO, WAIT A SECOND. IT'D ACTUALLY BE KINDA WEIRD TO CALL THE COPS OVER SOME GORILLAS. SO WHO WOULD YOU CALL THEN? THE ZOO? NAH, YOU CAN'T JUST CALL 'EM OUT OF THE BLUE LIKE THAT. I GUESS THE ONLY [redacted] CAN DO IS PRETEND THEY DON'T NOTICE ANYTHING.

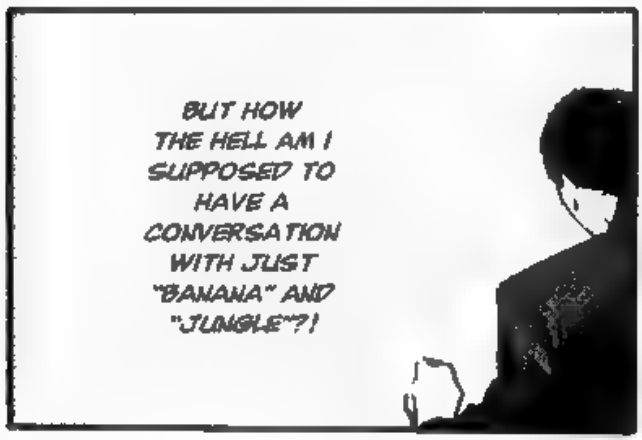

DAMN. AT THE VERY LEAST, I THOUGHT I'D BE ABLE TO TALK WITH THAT FOREIGNER... OH, WELL. I'LL JUST HAVE TO CHANGE TACTICS AND FIGURE OUT IF THESE GORILLAS HAVE ANY LINGUISTIC ABILITIES.

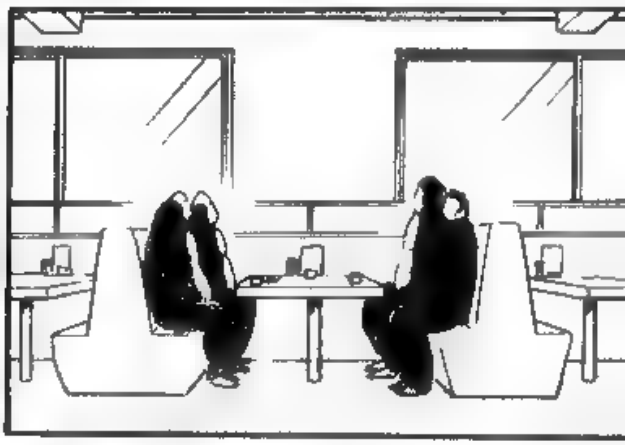
COMPU-
TER.
INTERNET.

TWITCH
BANANA.


TWITCH
JUNGLE.
MOBILE.

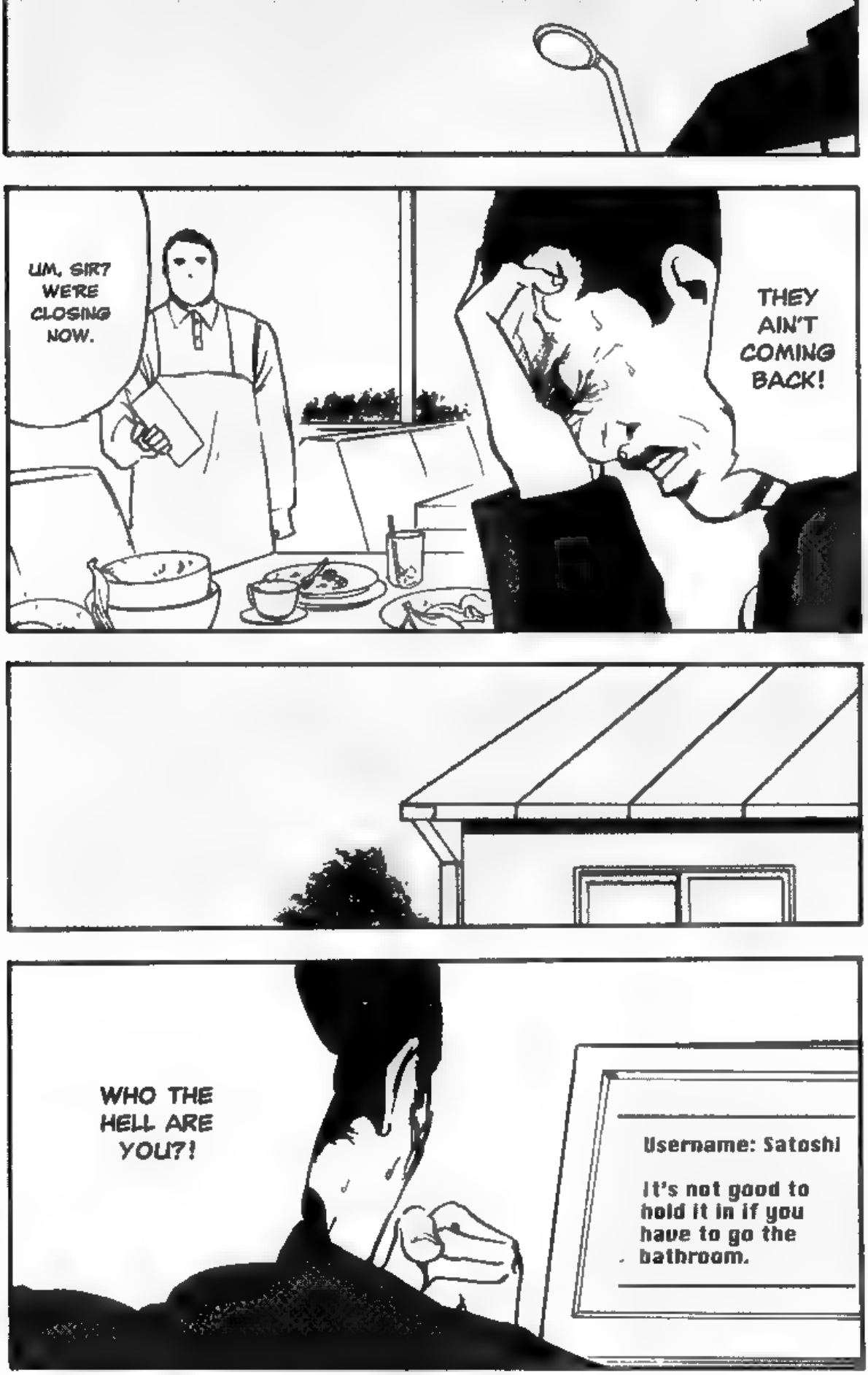
IT LOOKS LIKE "BANANA" AND "JUNGLE" CAN GET THROUGH TO THEM...
HUH.


BUT HOW THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH JUST "BANANA" AND "JUNGLE"?!



BUT AT THE VERY LEAST, I CAN MAKE SURE THEY DON'T PULL ANOTHER EAT-AND-RUN!
OK, CALM DOWN. THIS WHOLE "CONVERSATION" IDEA IS DEAD IN THE WATER...

FINE! TODAY I WILL NOT GO TO THE BATHROOM, NO MATTER WHAT!
LAST TIME, THEY RAN OFF WHILE I WAS IN THE BATHROOM. THAT MEANS THESE JOKERS ARE JUST WATITIN' FOR ME TO GET UP FROM MY SEAT.
HUH? YOU WANT TO GO TO THE BATHROOM? WELL IF YA GOTTA GO, JUST GO! I AIN'T COMIN' WITH YOU!
OOGA
TOILET
HUH? WHAT IS IT?
OOGA
OOGA
GO BY YOURSELF, DAMMIT!
I SAID I'M NOT GOIN'!
DON'T TOUCH ME! YOU'RE GONNA RIP MY DAMN JACKET!
OOGA
I'M NOT GETTIN' OUT OF THIS SEAT, NO MATTER WHAT!
GOOD, NOW I'M IN THE CLEAR.
HEH. THEY FINALLY GAVE UP, HUH?
SHUFFLE


UM, SIR? WE'RE CLOSING NOW.
THEY AIN'T COMING BACK!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
Username: Satoshi
It's not good to hold it in if you have to go the bathroom.

THE "GORILLA THEORY" SEEMS RATHER CERTAIN...

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS
(BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE'RE STILL INTRODUCING THEM)

TAKASHI KAMIYAMA

Our protagonist, who now appears far more infrequently than he used to. He was originally intended to be extremely normal, but that idea seems to have gone out the window at some point. How he has not just acclimatized to his delinquent high school but actually grown to lead his ruffian friends to incite chaos (just not the type of chaos you'd imagine ruffians inciting) is a mystery. His dislike of all things badass is unmatched, though he certainly seems to be enjoying his school life. Still, his increasing absence in the manga is a matter of concern. His favorite musical artist is Michael Jackson.

SHINJIRO HAYASHIDA

The last volume of *Cromartie* revealed the shocking (or at least shockingly silly) truth that this king of fools actually sports a fake Mohawk. In any event, of all the characters appearing in this manga, Hayashida is the easiest to get along with. He appears to be close friends with not just Kamiyama and Maeda but Takenouchi and Hokuto as well. That being said, anyone who always calls people "old buddy" is suspicious indeed. Hayashida loves punk and jazz (!) and counts The Clash and Louis Armstrong among his favorite artists.

AKIRA MAEDA

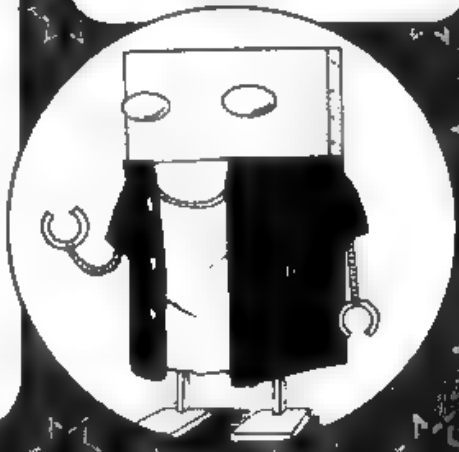
Has the most common sense of any of the characters. Maeda was actually envisioned as a very strong fighter, but sadly he has almost nothing to do with the story. Now all he has to do is appear and I can almost hear the readers saying, "OK, here comes a one-liner." To all *Cromartie* fans, it goes without saying that Maeda resembles his mother. He likes listening to Eric Clapton and the Beatles. He's a straightforward kind of guy.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS
(BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE'RE STILL INTRODUCING THEM)

FREDDIE

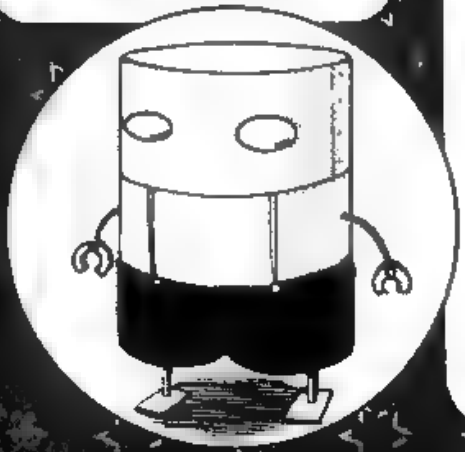
The most mysterious figure at Cromartie High. Who the heck is this guy? People have gradually found uses for him, such as having him carry things around, and Freddie never fails to oblige. He also seems to be rather popular with the readers, so around the time that Volume 4 came out we thought we'd make some special Freddie bandanas... which proved to be a total bust. We hardly sold any of them. Thus, Freddie has the ability to make even grown editors cry (sorry about that). Freddie's favorite type of music is unknown. Heh.

SHINICHI MECHAZAWA



Lives up to his name more than anyone else at Cromartie. His personality fairly brims with manliness, and that steel body of his is a real show stealer. In a survey of character popularity, he ranked a stunning No. 1. He's been turned into a motorcycle, had his memory erased and basically had one bad thing after another happen to him before settling back into his original form (or, rather, the author just got bored with it all). His favorite musician is Takuro Yoshida, in particular the song "Humanity."

MECHAZAWA BETA

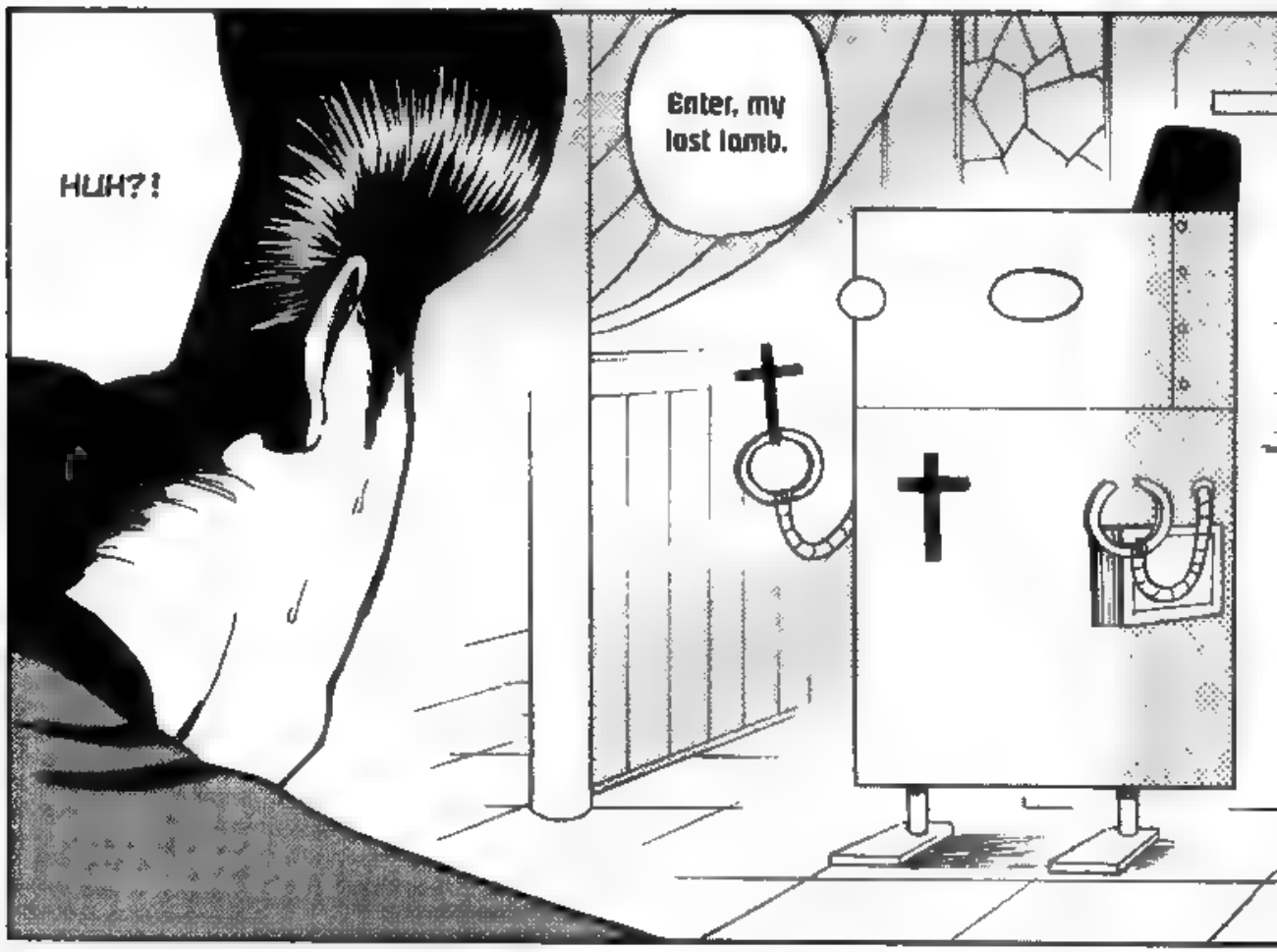


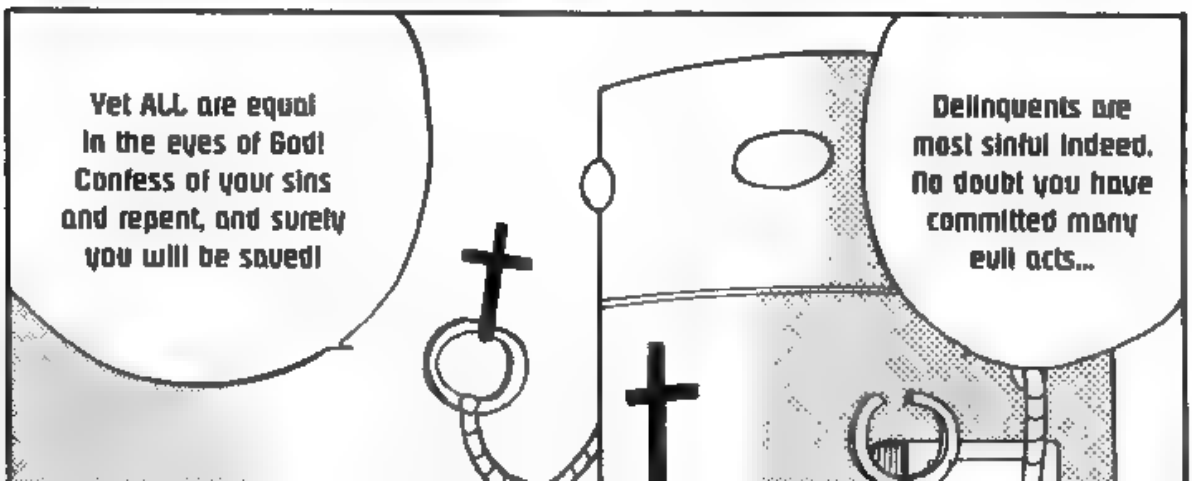
Shinichi Mechazawa's younger brother...at least, that's what he claims. What can you do? One time a gorilla stepped on him, crushing his diminutive frame, but he was rebuilt at Satoh Electronics. Many will remember how he came out of repair smaller than before, but with greater capabilities. The only thing he can say is "mekalata," and though he was thought up on a whim, his well-chosen characteristics make him popular with the girls, since he is "SO cute" after all. His favorite music is cell phone ring tones. (Half-assed description.)

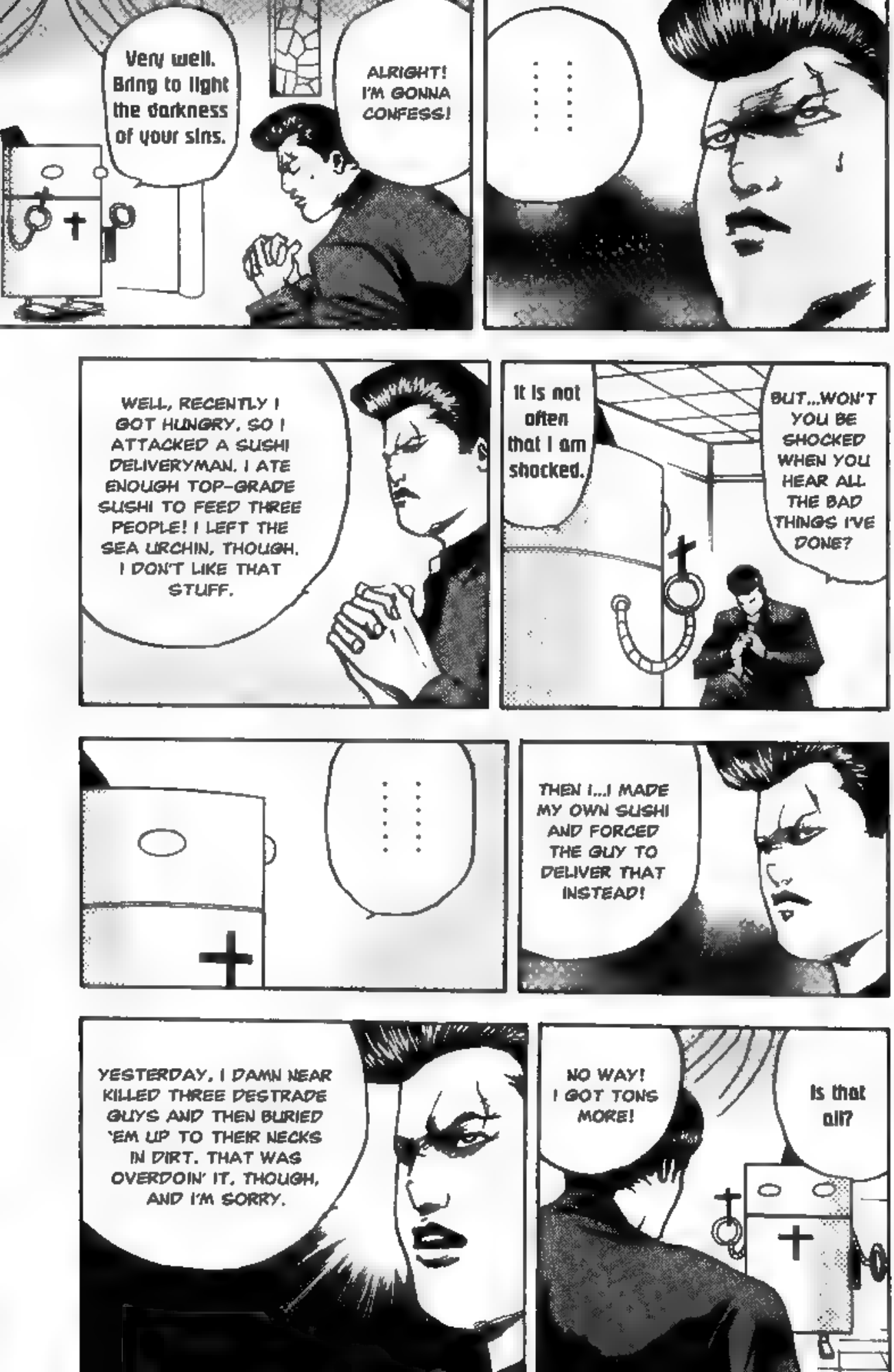
CHAPTER 105: **GOD SAVE THE CROMARTIE**

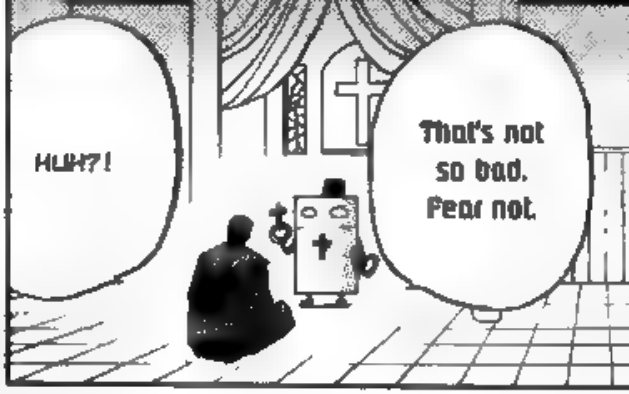
IT SURE AIN'T NORMAL FOR "YAMADA THE ANIMAL" TO BE BUMMIN' LIKE THIS. WHAT'S GOING ON?
WELL...I'VE JUST FELT SO DRAINED LATELY.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, YAMADA?
OH, I GET IT. YOU'VE GOT A GUILTY CONSCIENCE. WELL, THAT'S SOMETHIN' EVERY DELINQUENT RUNS INTO AT LEAST ONCE.
I'VE DONE A LOT OF BAD THINGS IN MY TIME, BUT LATELY I JUST HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO HANDLE THAT KINDA STUFF. I THINK I'M LOSIN' MY EDGE.
A PRIEST?
I HEARD THERE'S A PRIEST ON CAMPUS WHO'LL LISTEN TO US. YOU SHOULD GO SEE HIM.
BUT THERE'S NO ONE HERE AT SCHOOL I COULD TALK TO THIS...
WE HAVE A CONFESSIONAL AT THIS KIND OF SCHOOL? OR IS IT HERE [redacted] THIS KIND OF SCHOOL?
HUH.
CONFESSIONAL
CONFESSIONAL

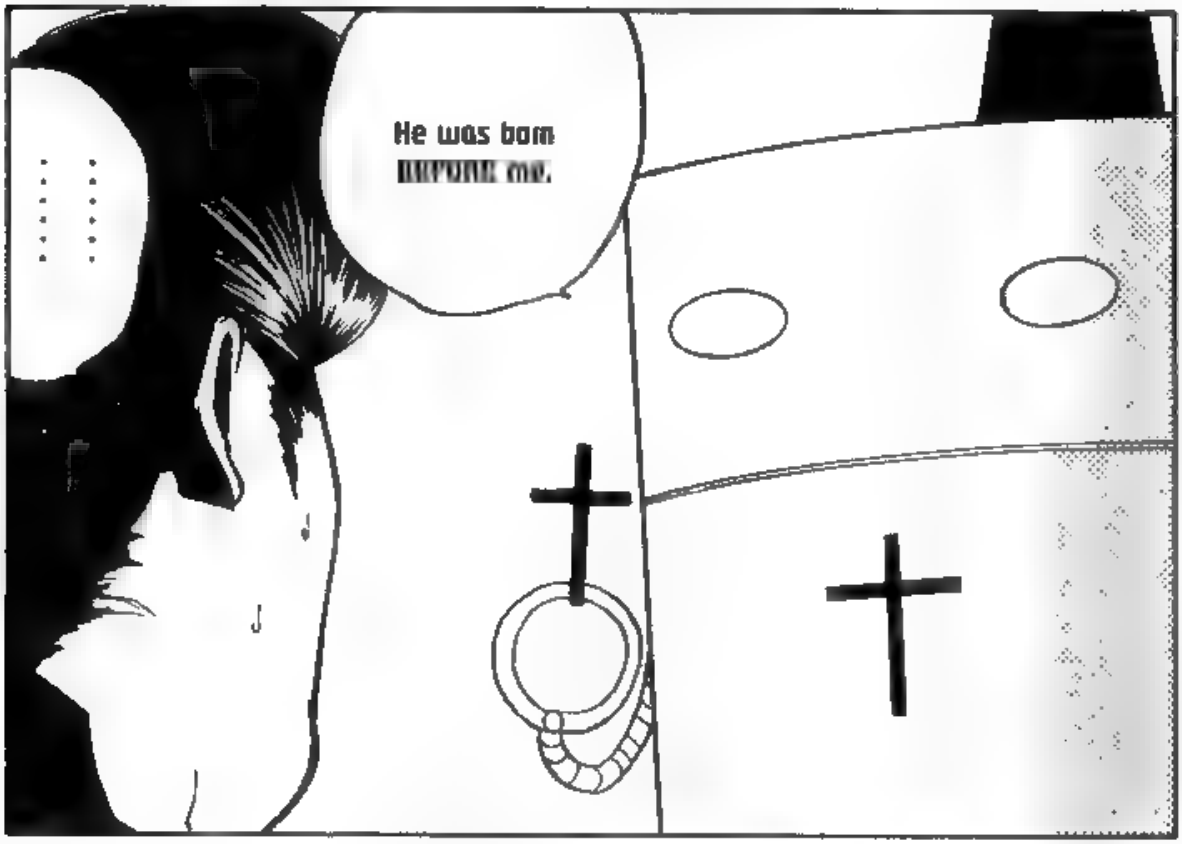
UH, EXCUSE ME...
RATTLE


HUH?!
Enter, my lost lamb.


Yet ALL are equal in the eyes of God! Confess of your sins and repent, and surely you will be saved!
Delinquents are most sinful indeed. No doubt you have committed many evil acts...


Very well. Bring to light the darkness of your sins.
ALRIGHT! I'M GONNA CONFESS!
WELL, RECENTLY I GOT HUNGRY, SO I ATTACKED A SUSHI DELIVERYMAN. I ATE ENOUGH TOP-GRADE SUSHI TO FEED THREE PEOPLE! I LEFT THE SEA URCHIN, THOUGH. I DON'T LIKE THAT STUFF.
It is not often that I am shocked.
BUT...WON'T YOU BE SHOCKED WHEN YOU HEAR ALL THE BAD THINGS I'VE DONE?
THEN I...I MADE MY OWN SUSHI AND FORCED THE GUY TO DELIVER THAT INSTEAD!
YESTERDAY, I DAMN NEAR KILLED THREE DESTRADE GUYS AND THEN BURIED 'EM UP TO THEIR NECKS IN DIRT. THAT WAS OVERDOIN' IT, THOUGH, AND I'M SORRY.
NO WAY! I GOT TONS MORE!
Is that all?



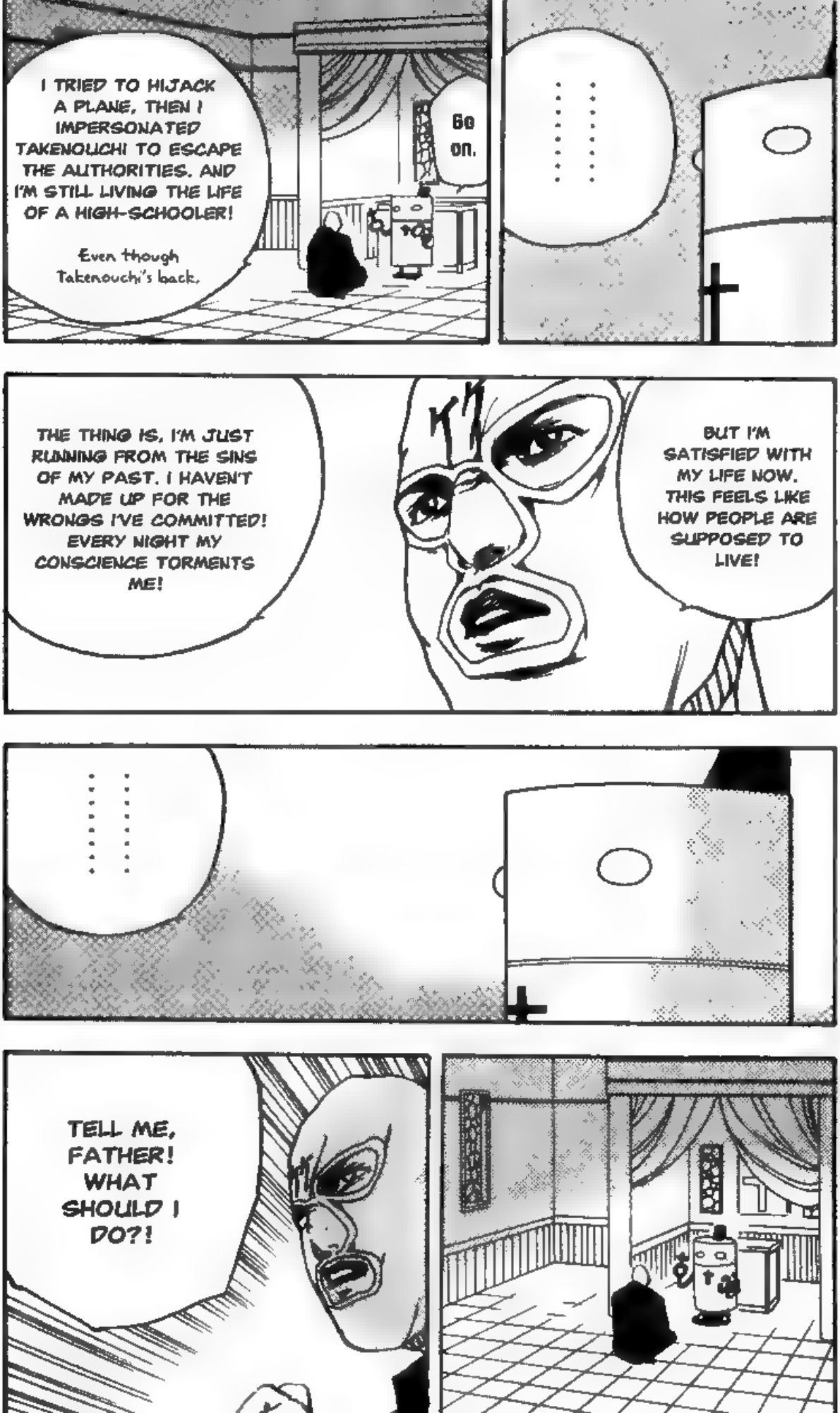


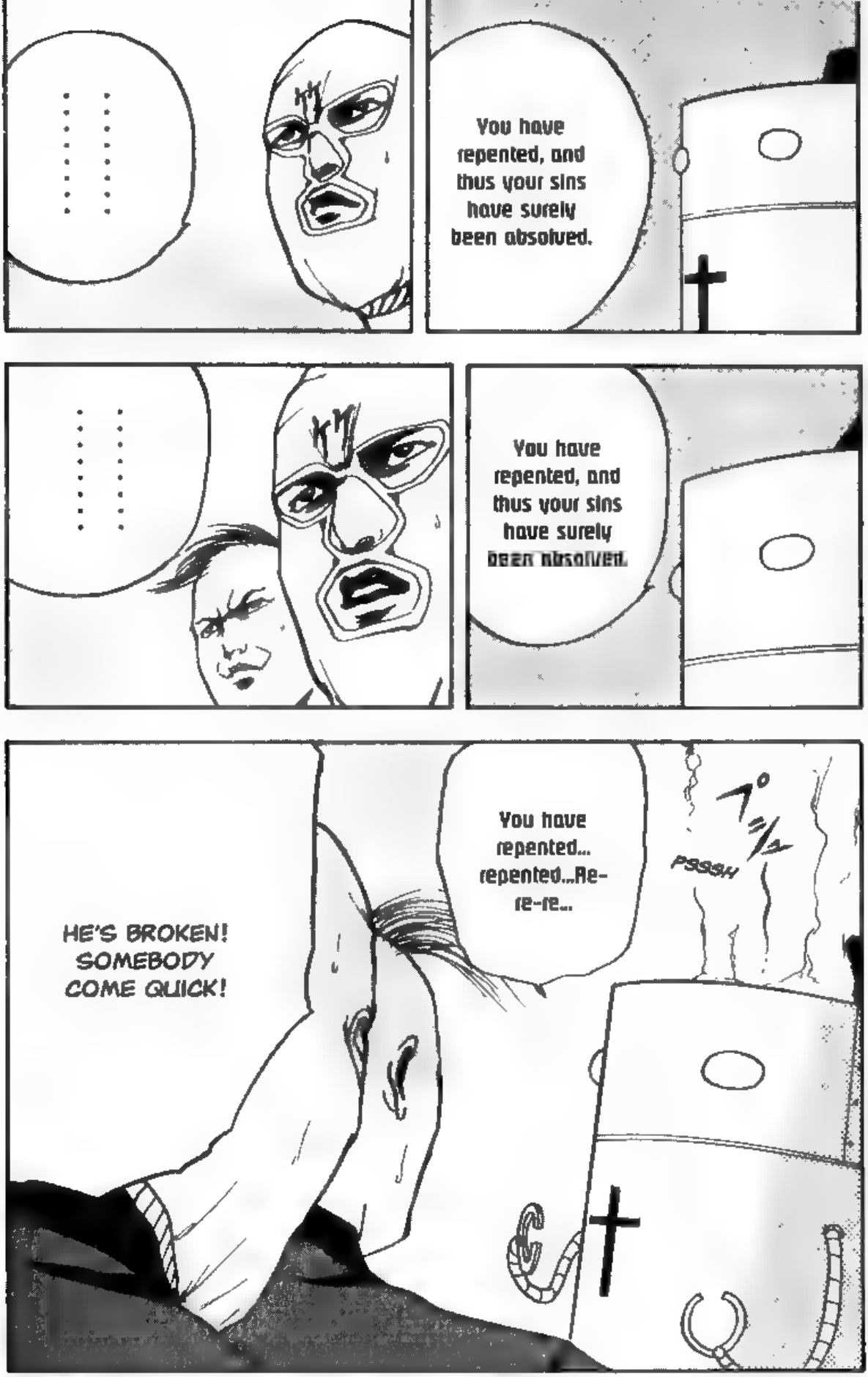
SO HOW THE HECK COULD HE BE A "BETA"?

CHAPTER 106: **LIVIN' ON A PRAYER**

CONFESSIONAL
Enter, my lost lamb.
I'M BACK.
ガラガラ
RATTLE
ENOUGH'S ENOUGH! I DON'T WANT TO HURT PEOPLE NO MORE! BUT THE THING IS... HOW'S A GUY LIKE ME GONNA GET ALL RESPECTABLE AND CRAP? IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE, FATHER?
I'VE REALLY DONE IT NOW. I SNAPPED AGAIN AND ALMOST KILLED THE GUY I WAS FIGHTING.

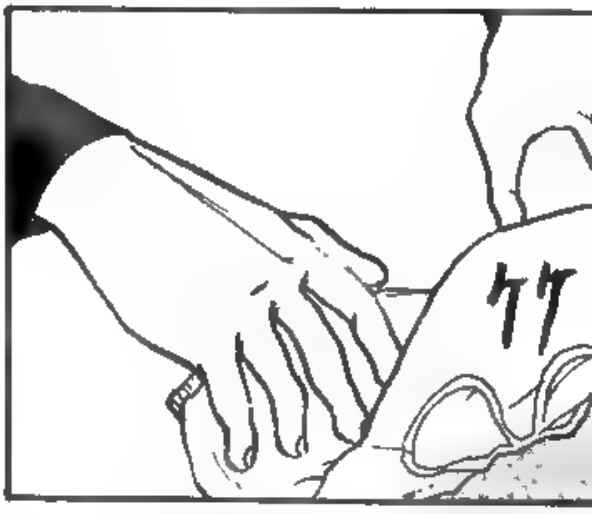
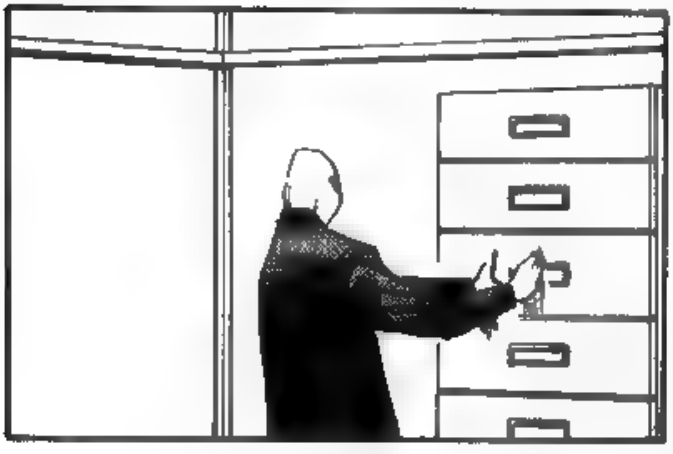
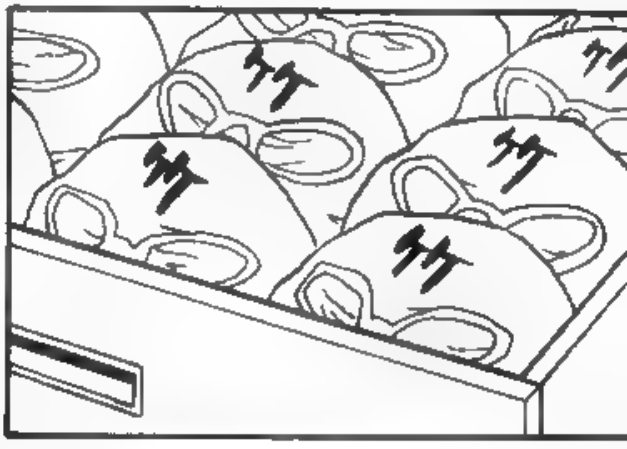
You have repented, and thus your sins have surely been absolved.
Enter, my last lamb.
PLEASE HEAR MY CONFESSION, FATHER.
CUT THAT ONE KINDA SHORT TODAY, HUH?
Next, please!
You have repented, and thus your sins have surely been absolved.
I WEAR A HAIRPIECE!
I...I'VE GOT A SECRET I CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT.
THE TRUTH IS, I WAS A WORLD-CLASS CRIMINAL BEFORE I CAME TO THIS SCHOOL.
Enter, my last lamb.
HELLO, FATHER.


I TRIED TO HIJACK A PLANE, THEN I IMPERSONATED TAKENOUCHI TO ESCAPE THE AUTHORITIES. AND I'M STILL LIVING THE LIFE OF A HIGH-SCHOOLER!
Even though Takenouchi's back.
Go on.
. . . . . .
THE THING IS, I'M JUST RUNNING FROM THE SINS OF MY PAST. I HAVEN'T MADE UP FOR THE WRONGS I'VE COMMITTED! EVERY NIGHT MY CONSCIENCE TORMENTS ME!
BUT I'M SATISFIED WITH MY LIFE NOW. THIS FEELS LIKE HOW PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO LIVE!
. . . . . .
TELL ME, FATHER! WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

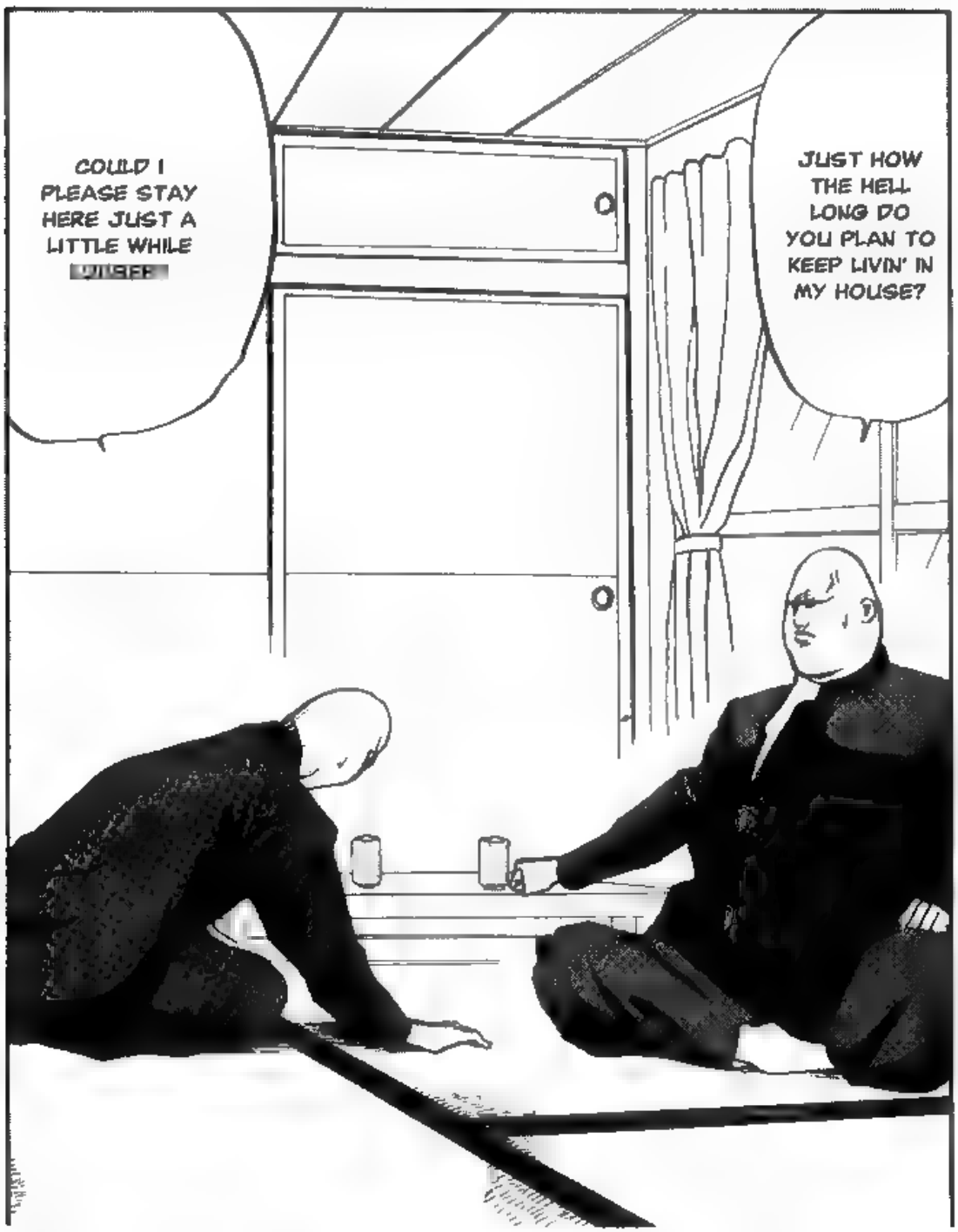

You have repented, and thus your sins have surely been absolved.
You have repented, and thus your sins have surely been absolved.
You have repented... repented...Re-re-re...
PSSSH
HE'S BROKEN! SOMEBODY COME QUICK!

REPENTING WON'T DO ANY GOOD.

CHAPTER 107: **TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS**

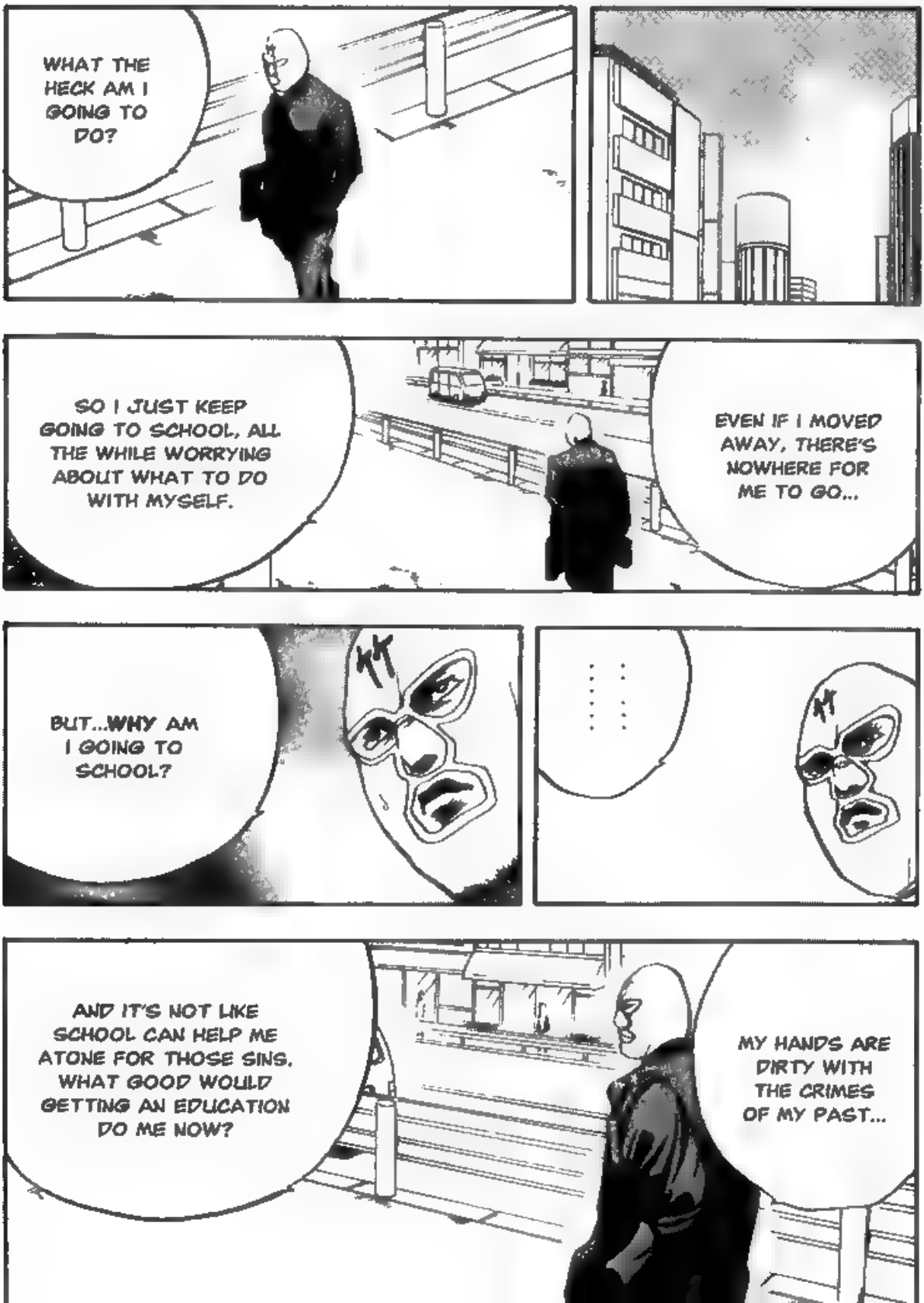




IF I JUST SUDDENLY SWITCHED MASKS, IT WOULD BE A LITTLE JARRING. I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO STICK WITH THIS ONE A LITTLE LONGER.
I'D LIKE TO TRY THIS ONE OUT SOMETIME, TOO...
ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE GUYS WHO DYE THEIR HAIR RIGHT BEFORE THE NEW SEMESTER, BECOMING TOTALLY DIFFERENT PEOPLE. THAT MIGHT BE A GOOD APPROACH TO TAKE.
THE TIMING HAS TO BE RIGHT, THOUGH.
TOK TOK
SIMMER
GLB GLB



AH! HE'S STILL LIVING THERE?

CHAPTER 108: I SAW SCHOOL STANDING THERE

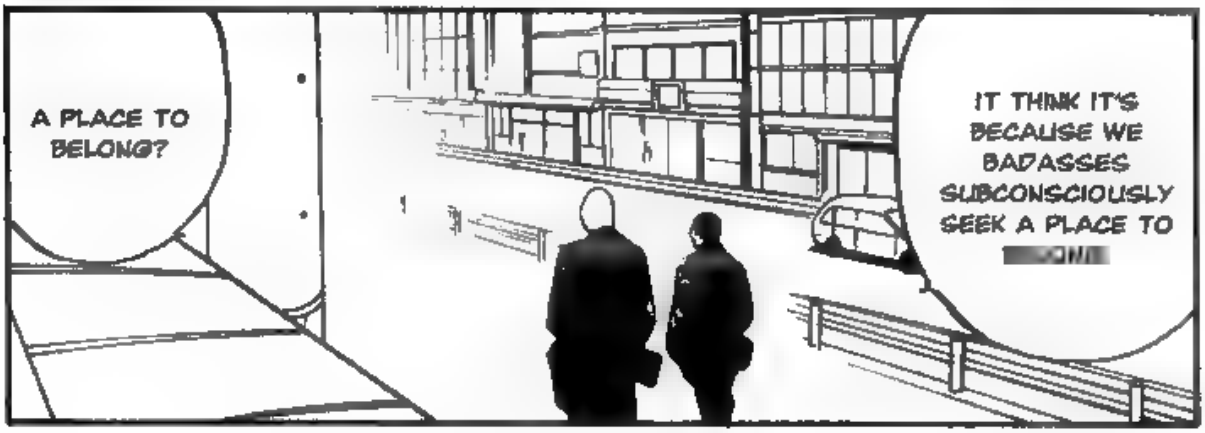

WHAT THE HECK AM I GOING TO DO?
SO I JUST KEEP GOING TO SCHOOL, ALL THE WHILE WORRYING ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.
EVEN IF I MOVED AWAY, THERE'S NOWHERE FOR ME TO GO...
BUT...WHY AM I GOING TO SCHOOL?
. . . . . .
AND IT'S NOT LIKE SCHOOL CAN HELP ME ATONE FOR THOSE SINS. WHAT GOOD WOULD GETTING AN EDUCATION DO ME NOW?
MY HANDS ARE DIRTY WITH THE CRIMES OF MY PAST...

GO AHEAD.
SAY, CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

HEY.
GOOD MORN-ING!

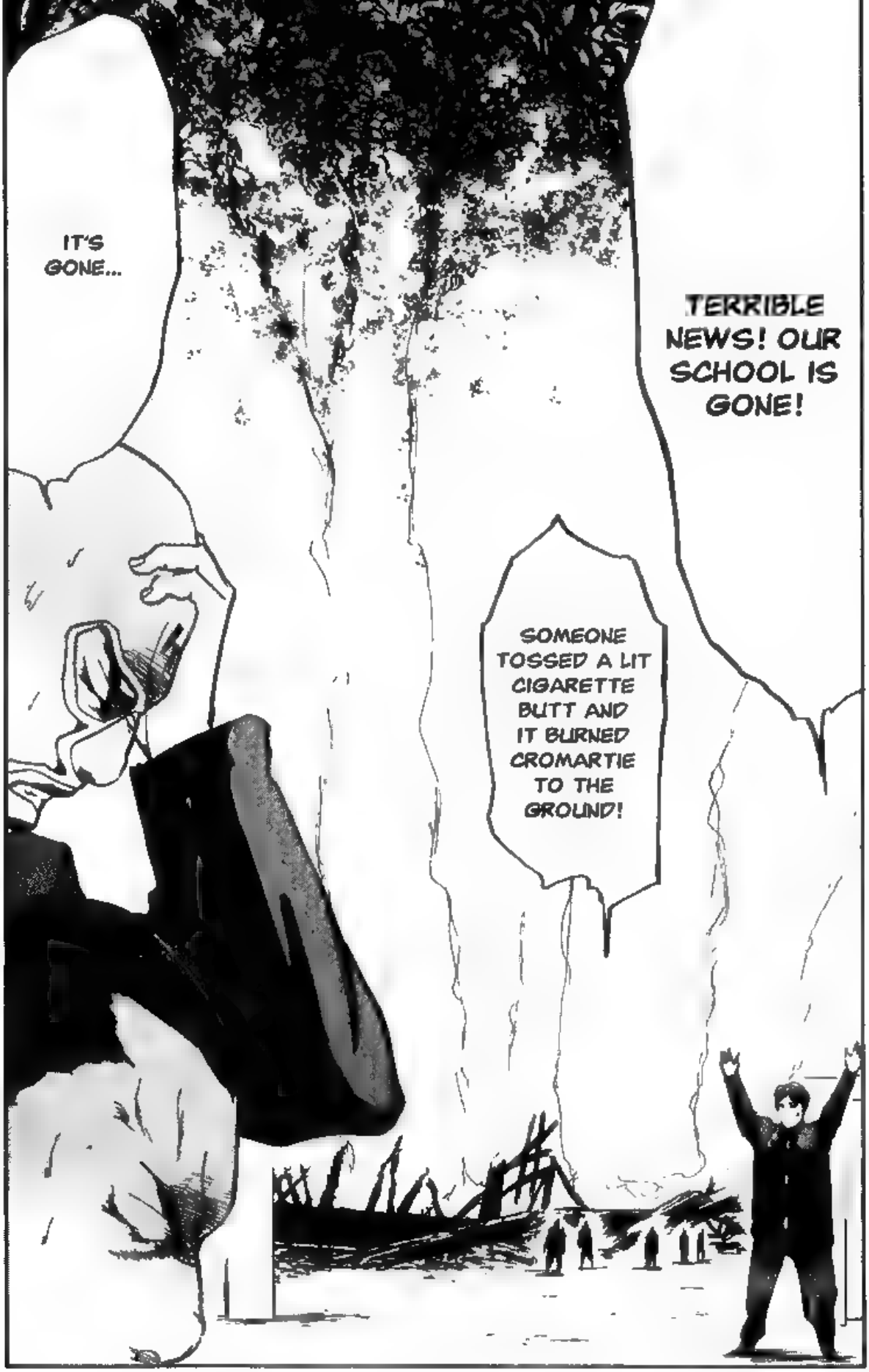
HMM. WELL... HOW CAN I PUT THIS?

WHY DO YOU KEEP GOING TO SCHOOL DAY AFTER DAY?


A PLACE TO BELONG?
IT THINK IT'S BECAUSE WE BADASSES SUBCONSCIOUSLY SEEK A PLACE TO

WERE BURDENED BY ALL THE DARK THINGS WE CARRY IN OUT HEARTS, AND GUYS LIKE THAT DON'T HAVE A PLACE WHERE THEY FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG.
THE THING WITH BADASSES IS THAT WERE BASICALLY LONERS.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, OUR SCHOOL IS THE PITS. IT'S LIKE A FRICKIN' ZOO. ACTUALLY, A ZOO WOULD PROBABLY BETTER THAN OUR SCHOOL.
YEAH. AND NOT JUST ONE OR TWO EITHER... I CAN'T GO INTO DETAILS, THOUGH.
I'LL BET YOU HAVE ONE OR TWO SKELETONS IN YOUR CLOSET, RIGHT?
YOUR CLASSMATES ARE THERE. YOUR FRIENDS ARE THERE. WE HAVE A PLACE WHERE WE CAN BELONG, AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO THAT SCHOOL.
BUT HERE'S THE THING: IT'S STILL BETTER THAN NO SCHOOL AT ALL, AIN'T IT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU'RE RIGHT. AND IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GOING ANYWHERE, IS IT?
.....
YOU'RE RIGHT! WE HAVE OUR SCHOOL!
FOR GUYS LIKE US, GUYS WHO'VE GOT NOTHING, WE CAN AT LEAST BE HAPPY THAT WE HAVE A SCHOOL.



LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE TO BELONG AFTER ALL.

CHAPTER 109: **TWO HEARTS**

TAKESHI KANESHIRO
BOSS OF THE 1ST-YEAR STUDENTS AT BERNAZARD HIGH SCHOOL. IT IS SAID THAT HIS FIGHTING STRENGTH IS ON PAR WITH EVEN TAKENOUCH
YUTAKA TAKENOUCHI
THE BOSS, AS EVERYONE KNOWS, OF THE 1ST YEAR STUDENTS AT CROMARTIE. NO ONE IS MORE RESPECTED, AND WHEN IT COMES TO FIGHTING ABILITY, NO ONE CAN HOLD A CANDLE TO HIM
GOOD TO SEE YA, MY BROTHER.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, KANESHIRO. YOU'RE LOOKIN' ALRIGHT.

IN TRUTH, THEY HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE CHILDHOOD, THEIR FRIENDSHIP A RARITY IN THE VIOLENT AND BLOODY WORLD IN WHICH THEY REIGN. YES, THESE TWO ARE HELD TOGETHER BY A BOND SO PROFOUND THAT OTHERS COULD NOT POSSIBLY GRASP

EACH A MATCH FOR THE OTHER, THESE TWO FEARSOME RIVALS DOMINATE THE ENTIRE SOUTH KANTO AREA.

IF TAKENOUCHI RULES THE EAST, THEN KANESHIRO RULES THE WEST.

BOTH OF THEM GET MOTION SICK VERY EASILY.

PUT SIMPLY.

CUT IT OUT. I DON'T WANNA HEAR THAT KIND OF TALK FROM YOU.

SO... YOU STILL GETTIN' MOTION SICK?

YEAH. WE HAD A CONTEST TO SEE WHO [redacted] QUIET THE LONGEST.

YOU KNOW, HANGIN' OUT WITH YOU BRINGS BACK A LOT OF MEMORIES... LIKE WHEN WE TOOK THAT FIELD TRIP AND WERE ON THE BUS FOR A REAL LONG TIME.

HOW COULD I FORGET? WE HAD TO TRANSFER FROM BUS TO TRAIN TO BUS, AND THEN IT WAS STRAIGHT TO THE ROLLER COASTER AND THE FERRIS WHEEL. IT'S KINDA FUNNY TO LOOK BACK ON, HUH?
HEY, REMEMBER WHEN WE TOOK THAT FIELD TRIP TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK? I'D NEVER BEEN SO SCARED IN MY LIFE.
THEY'RE PROBLY TRADING STORIES ABOUT ALL THE FIGHTS THEY'VE BEEN IN. JUST SEEIN' THEM STANDING TOGETHER IS GIVIN' ME CHILLS!
SO THAT'S TAKENOUCHI? HE'S GOT THE KIND OF **PRESENCE** YOU'D EXPECT FROM THE BOSS OF CROMARTIE, Y'KNOW? HEY, WHAT DO YOU THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT?
YEAH. I'M HEAD OF A BIKER GANG.
BY THE WAY, ARE ALL THESE YOUNGER GUYS PART OF YOUR GANG OR SOMETHING?
HEH. YOU JUST DON'T GET IT.
GIMME A BREAK, MAN. YOU GET MOTION SICK EVEN EASIER THAN I DO!
A BIKER GANG?!

THEY DRIVE A LOT SLOWER THAN YOU THINK.
THE THING ABOUT BIKER GANGS IS...

HUH?!

SEE, THERE ARE ACTUALLY TWO MAIN TYPES OF BIKER GANGS
TAKE IT EASY, TAKENOUCHI. JUST LISTEN.
DUDE, A BIKER GANG IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO GET TOGETHER AND HAUL ASS DOWN THE STREET! SOME OF 'EM EVEN GO ON TO BE PRO RACERS!

THEY'RE JUST IN IT TO CAUSE AS MUCH OF A RUCKUS AS THEY CAN. AND THAT MEANS THEY DRIVE AROUND REAL SLOW.
THE FIRST TYPE IS MADE OF UP GUYS WHO ARE IN IT FOR THE THRILL OF THE RIDE. AS FOR THE OTHER TYPE...
AND IF YOU DON'T SPEED, THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD MAKE ANY DANGEROUSLY SHARP TURNS. THINK ABOUT IT!
SO THAT'S HOW IT WORKS... Y'KNOW, IF YOU DON'T ACTUALLY SPEED THEN IT'S KINDA SAFE.
OBVIOUSLY, MY GANG'S THE KIND THAT DRIVES AROUND SLOW.
NOW YOU'RE CATCHING ON. RIDING IN A GANG'S NOT THAT SCARY.
BIKER GANGS ARE OK WITHOUT HELMETS BECAUSE THEY RIDE SO SLOW?!
Y-YOU MEAN THAT...
HUH?!
HERE. YOU WANNA GIVE IT A TRY?

HMM. IN THAT CASE, IT SHOULD BE ALRIGHT.
RELAX. I WON'T EVEN START THE ENGINE.
QUIT FOOLIN' AROUND, MAN! YOU'RE MY BRO AND ALL, BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T JOKE ABOUT!
YEAH. IT'S NOT TOO BAD.
WELL?
VRRRM
RIGHT? IT'S BETTER THAN YOU EXPECTED, HUH?
That's for the window
VWEE
ACTUALLY, IT FEELS KINDA NICE.

HA! I'M JUST MESSING WITH YOU, BRO!
H-HEY, DAMMIT! THIS AIN'T FUNNY!
A CUP HOLDER. YOU CAN PUT YOUR CANNED DRINKS OR WHATEVER IN IT.
AND WHAT'S THIS?
MAYBE THEY'RE DISCUSSIN' SOME SECRET PLAN, LIKE A BIG-ASS [illegible] SOMETHING!
WHAT THE HECK ARE THEY TALKIN' IN A CAR [illegible]
UP TILL NOW, I DIDN'T LIKE HEARING ANYONE EVEN **MENTION** A VEHICLE. BUT SEEING ONE UP CLOSE LIKE THIS, WITH ALL THESE GADGETS AND STUFF...IT'S KINDA NICE.
MAN, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS THINKIN' UP NEW THINGS.
IT EVEN CONNECTS TO THE A/C VENT, SO IT'LL KEEP YOUR DRINK FROM GETTING TOO WARM.
YOU KNOW, SOME OF THE GUYS UNDER ME GET MOTION SICK, BUT THEY JOINED THE GANG AND GOT OVER IT. THIS COULD BE A GOOD THING FOR YOU.
SO YOU'VE COME AROUND, HUH? C'MON, GIVE IT A SHOT!
MAYBE I'LL GIVE THIS BIKER THING A TRY, TOO.

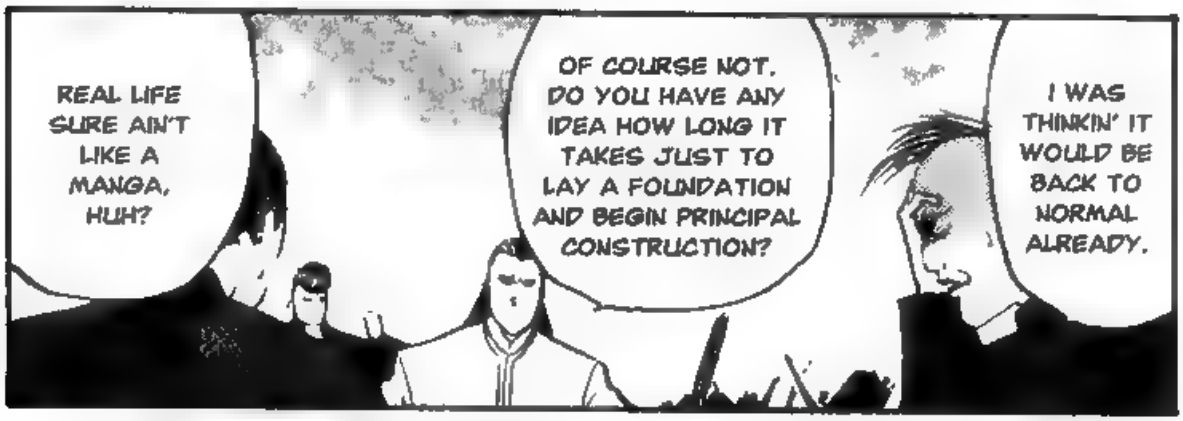
HMM. DOESN'T SOUND BAD, BUT I'VE STILL GOT MY DOUBTS. LIKE, WHAT REAL **SIGNIFICANCE** IS THERE IN JOINING A BIKE GANG?
THE OTHER THING ABOUT BEIN' IN A BIKE GANG IS THAT WE GET INTO FIGHTS A LOT LESS THAN YOU'D THINK. IT'S 'CUZ WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME RIDIN' AROUND SLOW.

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET ANY RESPECT OR ANYTHING, EITHER. YOU JUST CRUISE AROUND TOWN AT NIGHT, MAKING NOISE AND BOTHERIN' PEOPLE. AND OF COURSE, YOU DON'T GET PAID...IN FACT, IT'S PRETTY MUCH A WASTE OF TIME.
WELL, THAT'S THE THING. THERE IS NO BIG MEANIN' TO IT. YOU'VE GOT NO RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH MEANS THERE'S NOT MUCH TO THINK ABOUT.

BIKE GANGS HAVE IT ROUGH, TOO.

CHAPTER 110: **BURN**

WHAT?!
THE SCHOOL'S GONE, THOUGH.


REAL LIFE SURE AIN'T LIKE A MANGA, HUH?
OF COURSE NOT. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW LONG IT TAKES JUST TO LAY A FOUNDATION AND BEGIN PRINCIPAL CONSTRUCTION?
I WAS THINKIN' IT WOULD BE BACK TO NORMAL ALREADY.

I FEEL LIKE A KID WHO WANTS TO BE GOOD TO HIS PARENTS, EXCEPT NOW HE HASN'T GOT ANY. SHOOT! IF ONLY I'D BUCKLED DOWN AND STUDIED WHILE WE STILL HAD A SCHOOL...
DAMN! WHY IS IT THAT I WANT TO STUDY SO BAD RIGHT NOW, WHEN I KNOW I CAN'T STUDY?

KAMI-YAMA?!
FEAR NOT!
BUT THERE'S [illegible] WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TEXTBOOKS ANYMORE.
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL...
THWUMP
HERE! TEXTBOOKS FOR ALL!
I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN JUST SUCH A SHORTAGE INTO ACCOUNT!
IT'S JUST, SEEIN' ALL THOSE BOOKS KINDA MADE ME NOT WANNA STUDY ANYMORE.
WELL?
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WOULD LIKE TO GO TO SCHOOL BUT ARE DENIED THE CHANCE? CAN'T YOU SEE THE OPPORTUNITY THAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU?!
NOW YOU'RE JUST BEING PETULANT! IF UNABLE TO STUDY, YOU SAY YOU WANT TO, YET WHEN TOLD TO STUDY, YOU REFUSE!

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?
UH, NOW THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN RID OF 'EM, I KINDA WANT TO STUDY AGAIN.
FLOP
FINE! I'LL JUST THROW [redacted] AWAY!
WOULD YOU MAKE UP YOUR MINDS?! GOOD GRIEF!
NAH, I DON'T WANNA STUDY ANY-MORE.
THMP
FINE. HERE YOU ARE.
DUDE, NOW I DON'T WANNA STUDY!
THEN HERE YOU ARE.
AH. I FEEL LIKE STUDYIN' AGAIN.
INTO THE TRASH THEY GO!
YEAH, SORRY. I DON'T FEEL LIKE DOIN' THIS. AT ALL.
YES, WHICH IS IT?
NOW I DON'T... UH, WHICH IS IT NOW?
THEN I'LL **PRETEND** TO THROW THEM OUT THEN PUT THEM HERE.

YOU PROBABLY DON'T EITHER, KAMIYAMA.

CHAPTER 111: **TELL US WHY**

SO, UH, NOW THAT THE SCHOOL'S GONE AND ALL, WHY ARE WE STILL COMING HERE?
WHAT?
I KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE.
MAYBE WE DO HAVE THE DAY OFF BUT WE CAME HERE ANYWAY!
YEAH! WE GET TIME OFF WHEN THERE'S SNOW OR A TYPHOON... AND YOU CAN'T HAVE CLASSES IF THERE'S NO SCHOOL!
It should go without sayin'.
NORMALLY YOU'D HAVE THE DAY OFF IF YOUR SCHOOL WAS DE-STROYED, RIGHT?

DO THEY BECOME BADASSES BECAUSE THEY'RE LONELY, OR ARE THEY LONELY BECAUSE THEY'RE BADASSES? THAT PART, AT LEAST, IS NOT SO CLEAR.
BASICALLY, BADASSES BY NATURE FEEL ISOLATED. ON THE ONE HAND THEY HATE SOCIETY, BUT ON THE OTHER THEY'RE PRONE TO EXTREME LONELINESS.

AH!
CRACKLE
I WILL BURN THESE BOOKS!
Hya!

I REALIZE NOW THAT TRYING TO FORCE YOU TO STUDY WAS A MISTAKE...
MATH

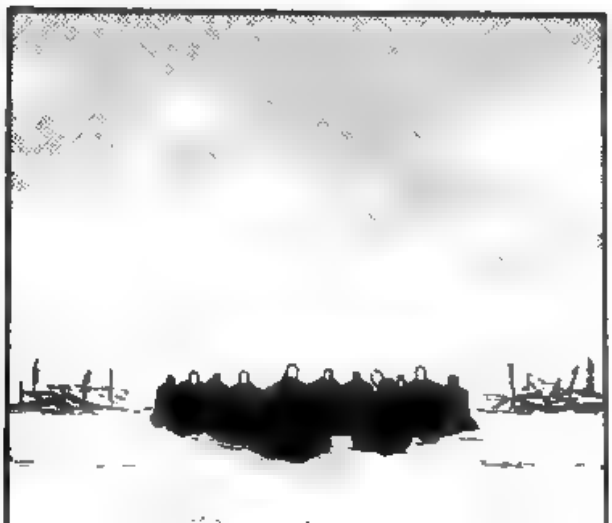
SO THERE YOU HAVE IT. COME, MY BADASSES! LET US SPEAK TOGETHER SO AS TO TAKE OUR MINDS OFF OUR LONELINESS!

SHUT UP, ALREADY!
OH, MAN! NOW I WANNA STUDY AGAIN!

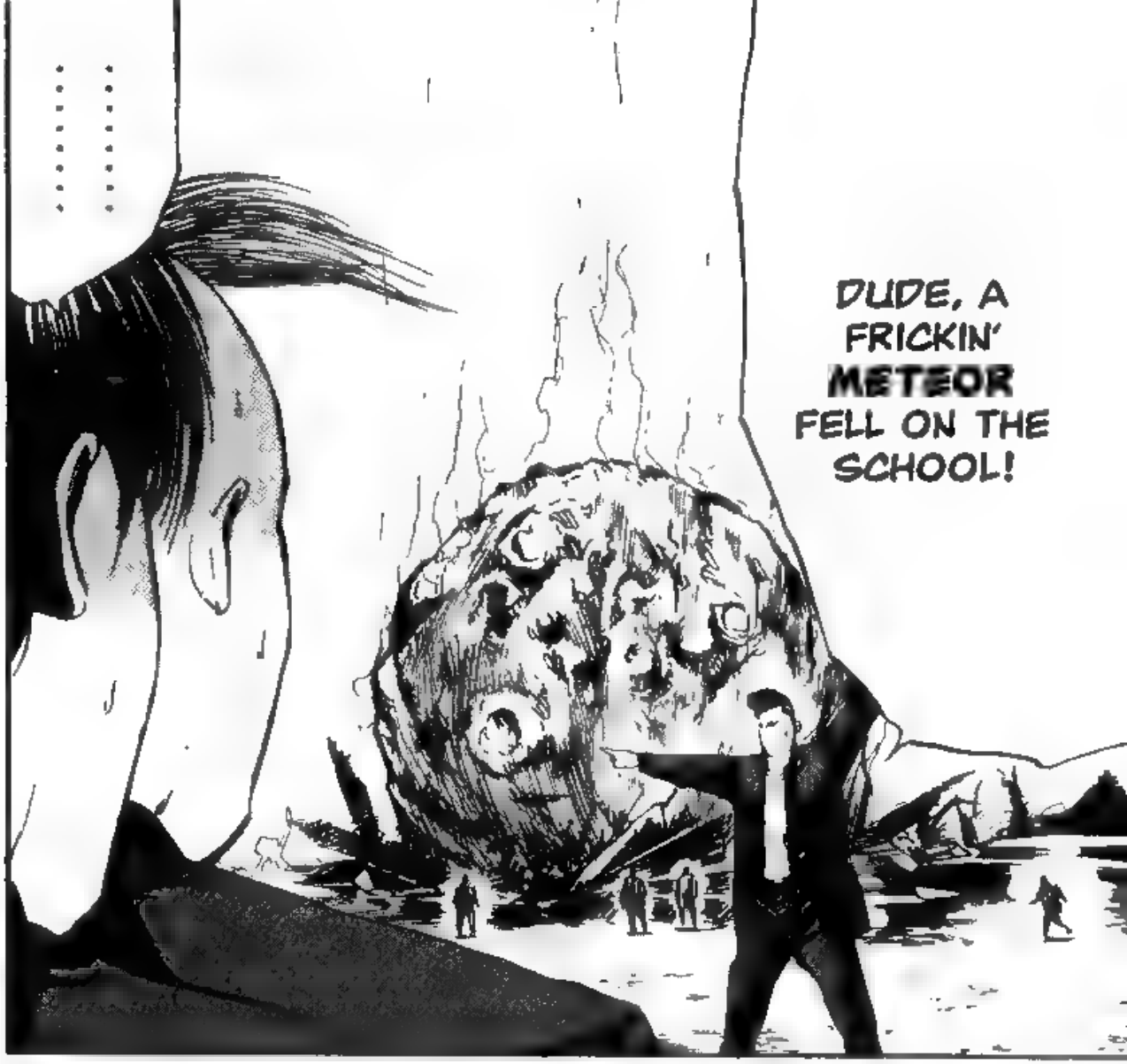
I SEE YOUR POINT. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE DISCUSS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT?

HOW ABOUT SOMETHING THAT WE WOULD NOT NORMALLY DISCUSS? SERIOUS MATTERS, FOR EXAMPLE.
UH... WHAT DO WE TALK ABOUT?

IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE GOT A CHOICE. I NEVER PLANNED ON GOING TO COLLEGE.
SO. ARE YOU GOING TO LOOK FOR A JOB?



THE THING IS, WHAT IS IT ABOUT A COMPANY THAT GIVES IT JOB SECURITY?
SOMEWHERE THAT HAS DECENT JOB SECURITY, I GUESS.
WHAT KIND OF COMPANY DO YOU WANNA WORK FOR?
HMM...
I'D GUESS IT'S GOTTA HAVE A WELL-ORGANIZED WORKERS' UNION...AND A SOLID BENEFITS PACKAGE.
WAIT JUST A MOMENT! YOU CAN'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO HAVE SUCH A DEFEATIST ATTITUDE. YOU NEED TO THINK POSITIVELY!
NOTHIN' EVER WORKS OUT FOR US, DOES IT?
NOW I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL DEPRESSED!
DUDE, THIS KINDA TALK IS WAY TOO NORMAL!
YEAH! IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY GET ANY WORSE THAN THIS!
KAMI-YAMA'S RIGHT!
. . . . . .
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY--WE'VE ALREADY LOST OUR SCHOOL, SO THERE'S NOTHING ELSE WE COULD LOSE, RIGHT?



THAT'S THE SECOND TIME NOW.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS
(BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE'RE STILL INTRODUCING THEM)

YUTAKA TAKENOUCHI

Has the most respect and fighting ability of all the 1st years at Cromartie. His only weakness is that unless he's riding a vehicle he just doesn't produce any laughs, so inevitably he began (painful though it was) to appear in the story less and less. Things have a tendency to turn unpleasant for Takenouchi whenever he runs into Kamiyama, so he does his best to avoid him. Takenouchi had a brief stay in America (where he was a gang boss), which is worth reading if you haven't already. His favorite kind of music is enka.

MASKED TAKENOUCHI

Has fully integrated himself into Cromartie High. He originally wore the mask because he was a hijacker, but it's ceased to serve any purpose. The question people are most likely to ask him is, "What the heck are you doing at school?" Masked Takenouchi is a master of pillow-jutsu, which is the art of altering a pillow's softness depending upon the needs of its user. Since being at Cromartie he has become quite straightforward and reasonable, which could also be because he's so much older than the others. (He's assumed to be in his 30s.) Say, whatever happened to his mask-wearing accomplice? Masked Takenouchi enjoys listening to Latin music.

TAKESHI HOKUTO

Born into a wealthy family, Hokuto planned to one day rule over all the high schools in Japan. However, he has completely forgotten these plans and is now a regular student at Cromartie. Continues to organize the "Hokuto Corps," a group of the finest hoodlums selected from schools he has already put under his control. Hokuto's usual answer to any given situation is to lie. He's probably the most irresponsible character of them all, which is what gets him into so much trouble. Everyone (this author included) believes that the Hokuto Corps is another facet of his megalomania. Hokuto enjoys listening to Wagner.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS
(BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE'RE STILL INTRODUCING THEM)

HOKUTO'S HENCHMAN

His name is a mystery even now, which in a way makes him more of an unknown than Mechazawa. No matter how hard he tries, this fellow is doomed to never make much of an impression on others. Sometimes he attempts to assert himself, but it always ends in failure. He is the most pliable of Cromartie's characters, which makes it easy for him to identify with Maeda. His undying loyalty to Hokuto is truly touching, but in this volume something happens that will test this loyalty. His favorite band is The Who. Dude, who the heck are *you*?!

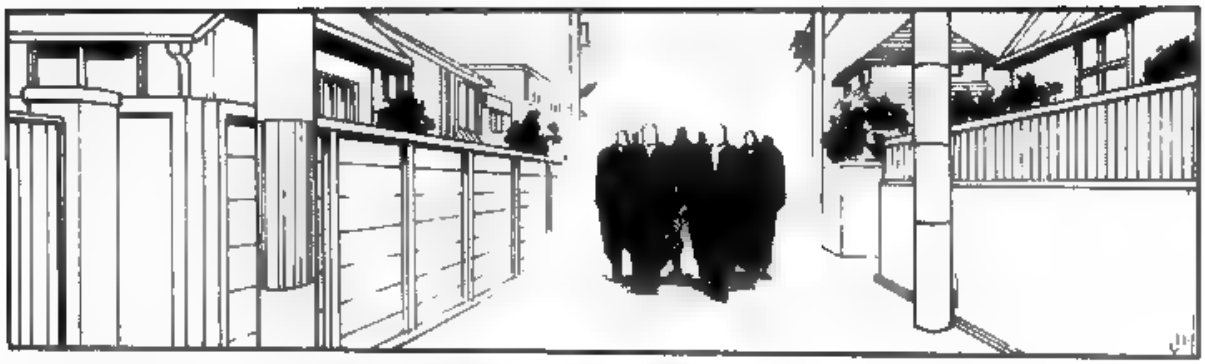
NOBORU YAMAGUCHI

Leader of the 1st year students at Destrade High School. Yamaguchi has an unparalleled love of comedy and regularly contributes to late-night radio programs under the pen name "Salty Taro." As a connoisseur of comedy, Yamaguchi has a zero-tolerance policy toward simple one-liners. He views Kamiyama, aka Honey Boy, as his archrival. A few of his favorite artists are Earth Wind and Fire, Jimi Hendrix and Crazy Cats.

JACKSON SETOUCHI

Leader of the 1st years at Bass High School, the stately looking Jackson presides over campus with the help of Akio Takejo, his right-hand man. Bass and Cromartie have long been rivals, and Setouchi would like nothing more than to see the two schools locked in bitter combat. Unfortunately, owing to Setouchi's less-than-galvanizing effect on others, Bass has sunk to a level of obscurity greater even than that of Destrade. Setouchi doesn't seem to have too many fans, but I don't mind. He pretty much gets the short end of the stick in this volume...Oh, and he likes to listen to Oasis.

CHAPTER 112: **HARLEM SHUFFLE**

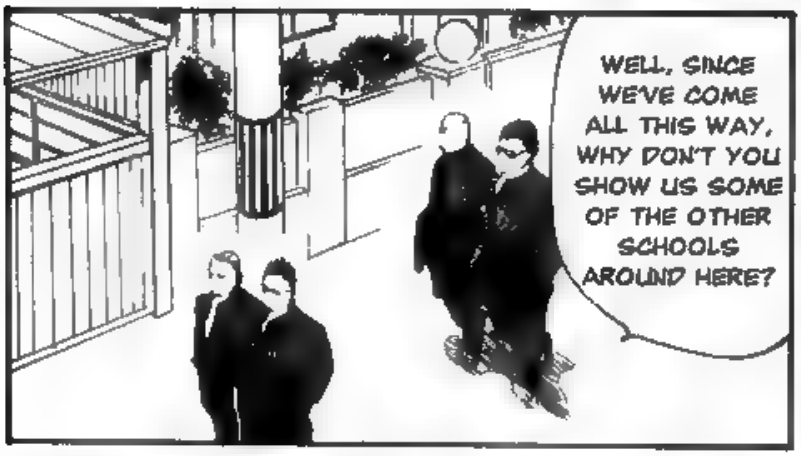


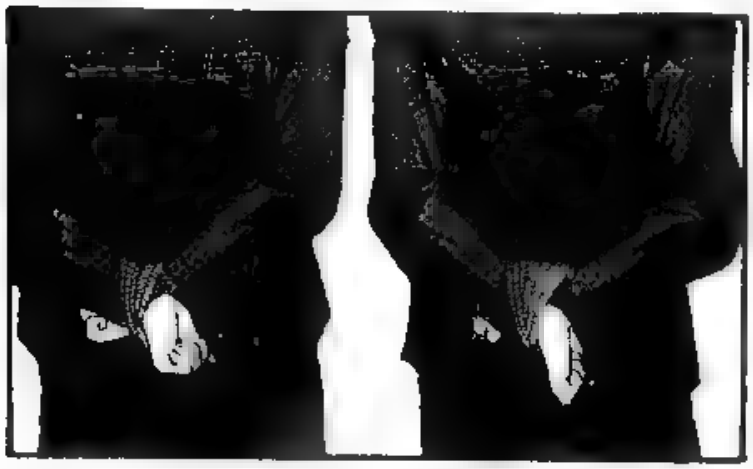
SURE. THERE'S A NEW CHINESE RESTAURANT OVER ON 2ND. YOU WANT TO GO CHECK IT OUT?
I'M HUNGRY. YOU WANNA GRAB SOMETHING TO EAT, TAKEJO?
AKIO TAKEJO
JACKSON SETOUCHI
LEADER OF THE BASS
HIGH 1ST YEARS

URG...
NNGH...
TAKURO YOSHIDA
YOSUI INOUE

YOU THINK YOU'VE BEATEN US?! YOU'RE JUST COWARDS WHO GO AROUND PLAYING DIRTY AND BLINDSIDING PEOPLE!
YOU TWO BASTARDS, HUH? YOU'RE THE ONES WHO'VE BEEN JUMPING PEOPLE LATELY, AREN'T YOU?
ANYWAY, YOU TALK PRETTY TOUGH CONSIDERING YOU ALL JUST GOT YOUR ASSES KICKED BY **TWO** GUYS. LOOKS LIKE BASS HIGH WAS JUST A JOKE AFTER ALL.
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS "PLAYIN' DIRTY" IN A FIGHT, YOU MORON.
WE'RE KINDA FAMOUS, Y'KNOW. OVER IN THE NEXT PREFECTURE, THEY CALL US THE **DEMONIC DUO**! ANYHOW, WE CAME HERE TO KICK THE CRAP OUT OF A FEW OF YOU TOKYO CHUMPS. TURNS OUT YOU'RE ALL TALK, THOUGH.
SHUT UP, YA PANSY.
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU TWO FROM?!
UNGH!
BWOMP
LUNGE
YOU SON OF A--

NRGH...
GIVE IT UP, MAN. YOU LOST, AND BASS HIGH IS OURS. FROM NOW ON, YOU TAKE YOUR ORDERS FROM US...AND DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT TRYIN' TO FIGHT IT!


WELL, SINCE WE'VE COME ALL THIS WAY, WHY DON'T YOU SHOW US SOME OF THE OTHER SCHOOLS AROUND HERE?



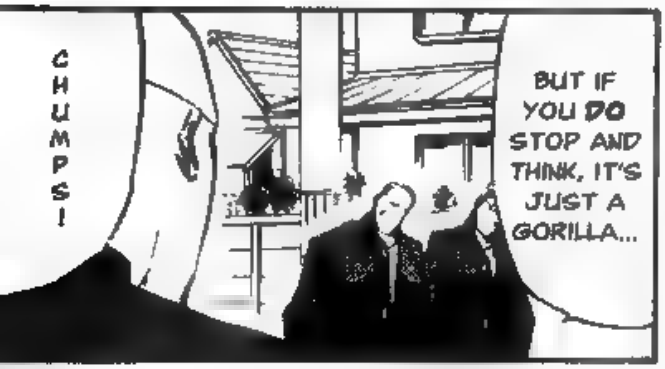
CRO-MARTIE?
SAY, ISN'T [redacted] SUPPOSED TO BE SOME SUPER [redacted] SCHOOL IN TOKYO? CRO-SOMETHING...

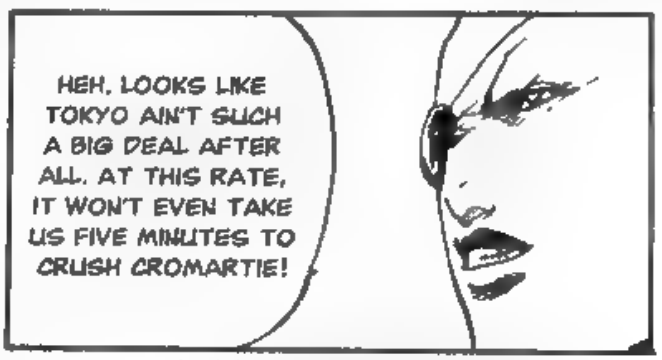
HA HA! NO COMPLAINING, YOU WUSS!
AT LEAST UNTIE THESE ROPES.

IF YOU CAME HERE TO TRY TO TAKE ON CROMARTIE, YOU SHOULD JUST GIVE IT UP RIGHT NOW. TRUST ME, YOU'LL BE SINGIN' A DIFFERENT TUNE IF YOU RUN INTO ANYONE FROM THAT SCHOOL.
TAKE MY ADVICE-- YOU'D BE BETTER OFF LEAVING THOSE GUYS ALONE. I DON'T KNOW HOW STRONG YOU TWO REALLY ARE, BUT THAT SCHOOL'S IN A WHOLE DIFFERENT LEAGUE.
THE SECOND A MAN STARTS HANGIN' HIS HEAD LIKE THAT, HE'S DONE FOR! ANY BADASS WHO CAN'T WALK WITH HIS HEAD UP HIGH IS A FAKE WHO NEEDS TO SHUT UP AND GET OUTTA THE GAME!
HEH. YOU REALLY ARE A BUNCH OF LOSERS! LISTEN TO YA! THEY'RE IN A "WHOLE DIFFERENT LEAGUE," ARE THEY? WE SHOULD "GIVE UP RIGHT NOW," HUH? SHEESH, YOU GUYS ARE PATHETIC!
WHAT IS IT?
AH!
URGH
THWOMP
NOW TAKE US TO THIS "CROMARTIE" OR WHATEVER, RIGHT NOW!
!?
RIGHT ON CUE, HUH?
HERE COME SOME GUYS FROM CROMARTIE RIGHT NOW!

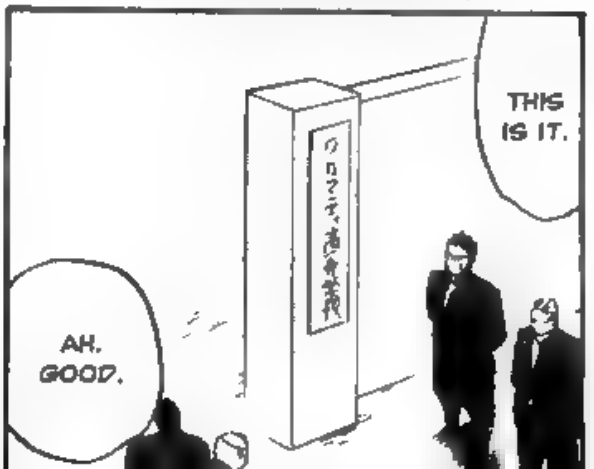
. . . . . .
YOU THINK YOUR FIGHTING TECH-NIQUES WILL WORK ON A GO-RILLA?

YOU SEE?! THAT'S A **GORILLA**! I'M TELLIN' YA, CROMARTIE JUST AIN'T NORMAL. IF YOU WANNA TURN TAIL AND RUN, NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!





*ON SIGN "CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL."



HA! YOU CAN'T CRUSH THEIR SCHOOL IF IT'S ALREADY BEEN CRUSHED, CAN YOU?!
THAT'S CROMARTIE FOR YOU!
IT...IT'S BURNED TO THE GROUND.
.....
HUH?! THESE GUYS AIN'T NORMAL EITHER!
YEAH.
WE'RE GOIN' IN.

SIX OF ONE, HALF A DOZEN OF ANOTHER.

CHAPTER 113: **UNION OF THE SNAKE**

THEIR NEXT TARGET WAS CROMARTIE, BUT THE SCHOOL WAS DESERTED ON ACCOUNT OF IT HAVING BEEN BURNED TO THE GROUND
THE DEMONIC DUO 'S OUT TO CONQUER TOKYO'S SCHOOLS, AND HAS ALREADY DEFEATED BASS HIGH.

TOSS
SNIP
HE GOT THAT ONE WITH A BANANA, TOO!
OOGA-
HEH. YOU GUYS ARE NO MATCH FOR US.
DAMN, I NEVER REALIZED!
I GET IT! EVEN IF IT'S A DIFFERENT GORILLA, IT'S STILL A GORILLA! OF COURSE IT'S GONNA REACT THE SAME WAY TO A BANANA!

WHERE WILL IT ALL END?!
LOOK! NOW IT'S A HORSE!
GRRRR

TOSS

IF IT'S A HORSE, YOU'RE GONNA NEED CARROTS, RIGHT? WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND THIS TIME?

I GUESS THE RULE IS, WHEN YOU RUN INTO ANIMALS YOU SHOULD FEED 'EM, HUH?
IT'S GONNA EAT THE BANANA?!
WHINNY

WHY SHOULD WE GET SURPRISED WHEN A **PERSON** SHOWS UP?
LOOK! IT'S A PERSON THIS TIME!
TOSS
THIS TIME YOU'VE GOT A HUMAN BEING TO DEAL WITH! OR A BORDERLINE HUMAN, AT LEAST... ANYWAY, YOU CAN'T SOLVE THIS ONE WITH A BANANA, DEMONIC DUO! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW, HUH?!
OH, MAN! THEY ***DID*** SOLVE IT WITH A BANANA!

MORE TO THE POINT, DO ANY OF THOSE FREAKS EVEN COUNT AS "HOODS"?
WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING ALL THIS TIME?!
IN OTHER WORDS, THE WAY TO DEAL WITH THOSE CROMARTIE GUYS IS JUST TO TOSS BANANAS AT 'EM?

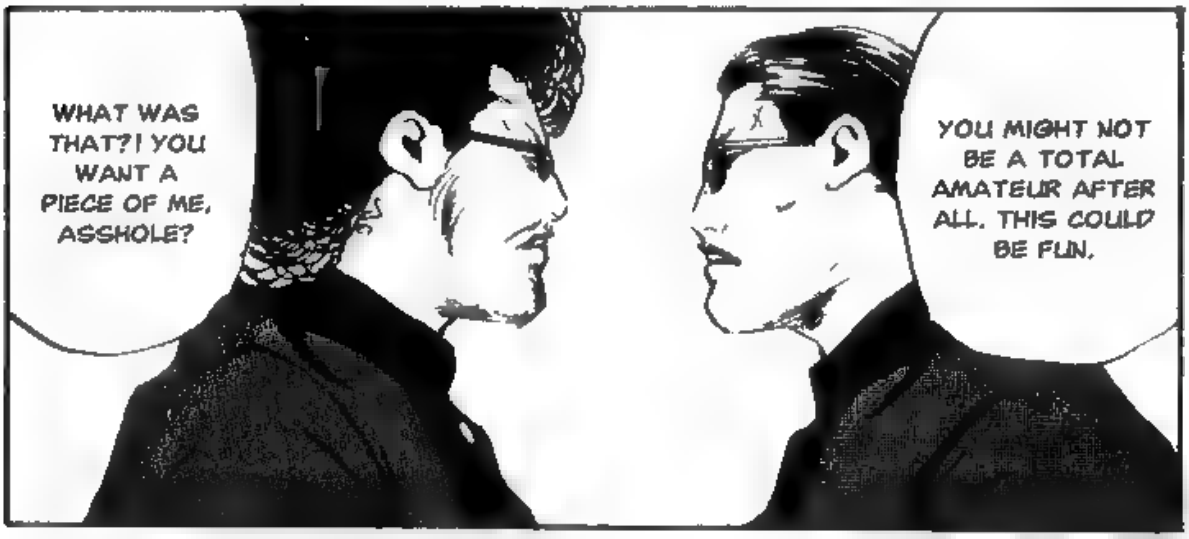
HUH?

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU TWO?! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND

KOBORU YAMAGUCHI
LEADER OF
DESTRADE'S 1ST YEARS

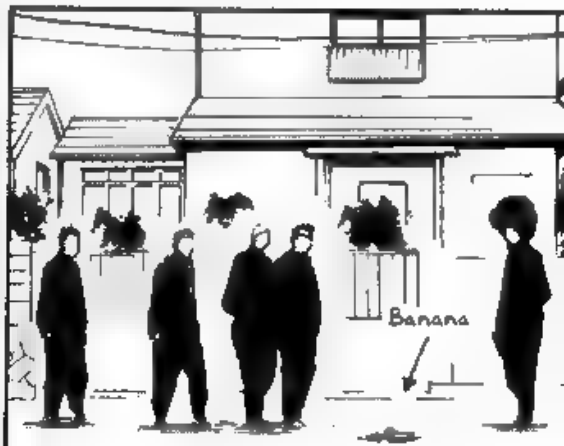
HEH. YOU'RE GOIN' DOWN, Q-TIP.
HOW ABOUT THAT, PARTNER? IT LOOKS LIKE THIS GUY'S KINDA FAMOUS.

WHAT THE?! YOU'RE DESTRADE HIGH'S TOP MAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

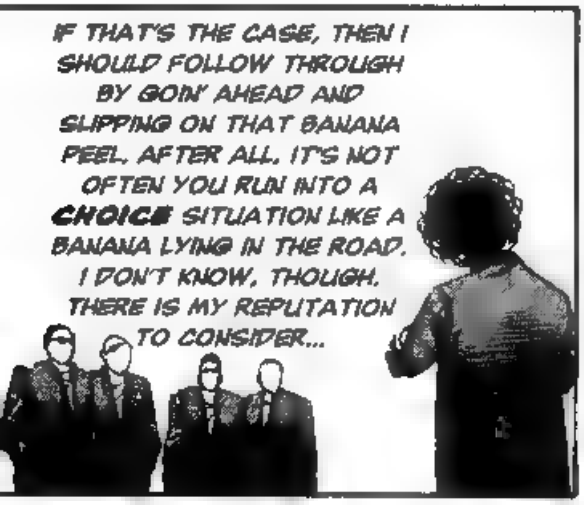

WHAT WAS THAT?! YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME, ASSHOLE?
YOU MIGHT NOT BE A TOTAL AMATEUR AFTER ALL. THIS COULD BE FUN.

TOSS
ポイ！

A BANANA?


Banana

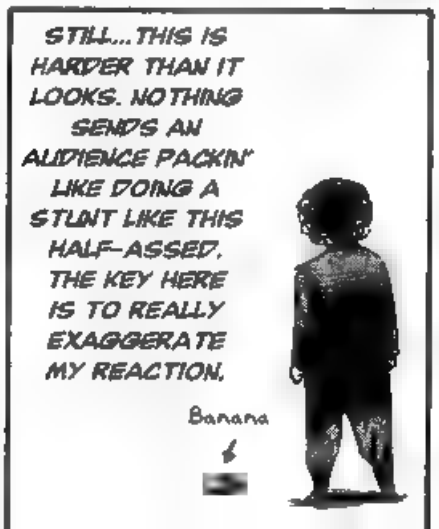
MAYBE HE EXPECTS ME TO TRIP ON THE BANANA PEEL... MAYBE HE'S SOME KIND OF COMEDY FANATIC!
he did say something about having fun.
C-COULD THIS BE THE SETUP TO A JOKE?

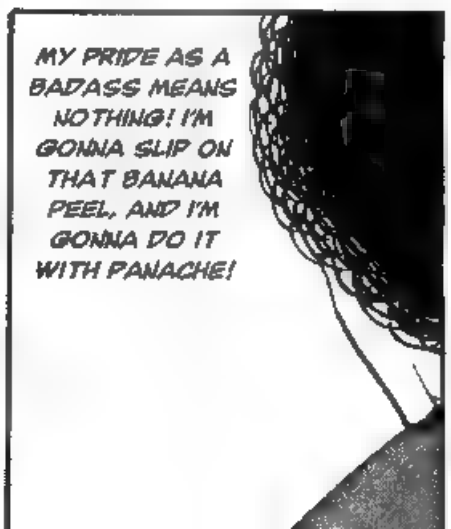

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN I SHOULD FOLLOW THROUGH BY GOIN' AHEAD AND SLIPPING ON THAT BANANA PEEL. AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU RUN INTO A CHOICE SITUATION LIKE A BANANA LYING IN THE ROAD. I DON'T KNOW, THOUGH. THERE IS MY REPUTATION TO CONSIDER...

THIS GUY'S DEFINITELY NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE. THE "UNIFORM AND SUNGLASSES" LOOK ALONE IS ENOUGH TO GET A LAUGH OR TWO...YEAH, THIS GUY'S DEFINITELY GOIN' FOR THE SETUP!

LIFE DOESN'T GIVE YOU TOO MANY CHANCES, AND I'VE SEEN MORE THAN MY SHARE OF COMEDIANS MISS THEIRS AND FADE AWAY!
TAKE THAT LAUGH AND MAKE IT YOURS!
NO! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, YAMAGUCHI?!

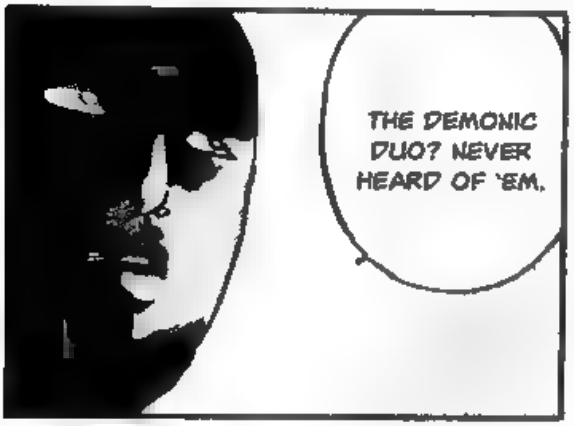
ALRIGHT, HERE GOES! YOUR TIME IS NOW, YAMAGUCHI!

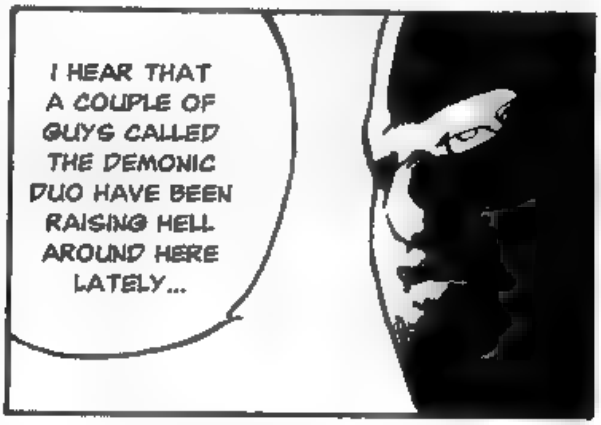

STILL...THIS IS HARDER THAN IT LOOKS. NOTHING SENDS AN AUDIENCE PACKIN' LIKE DOING A STUNT LIKE THIS HALF-ASSED. THE KEY HERE IS TO REALLY EXAGGERATE MY REACTION.
Banana


MY PRIDE AS A BADASS MEANS NOTHING! I'M GONNA SLIP ON THAT BANANA PEEL, AND I'M GONNA DO IT WITH PANACHE!

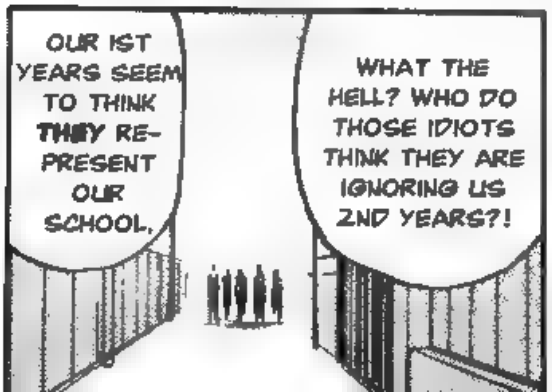
YAMAGUCHI—THOROUGHLY DEPRESSED.

CHAPTER 114: SURE KNOW SOMEBODY



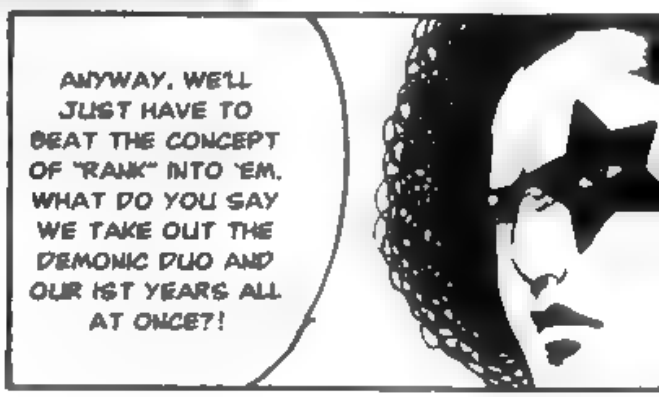


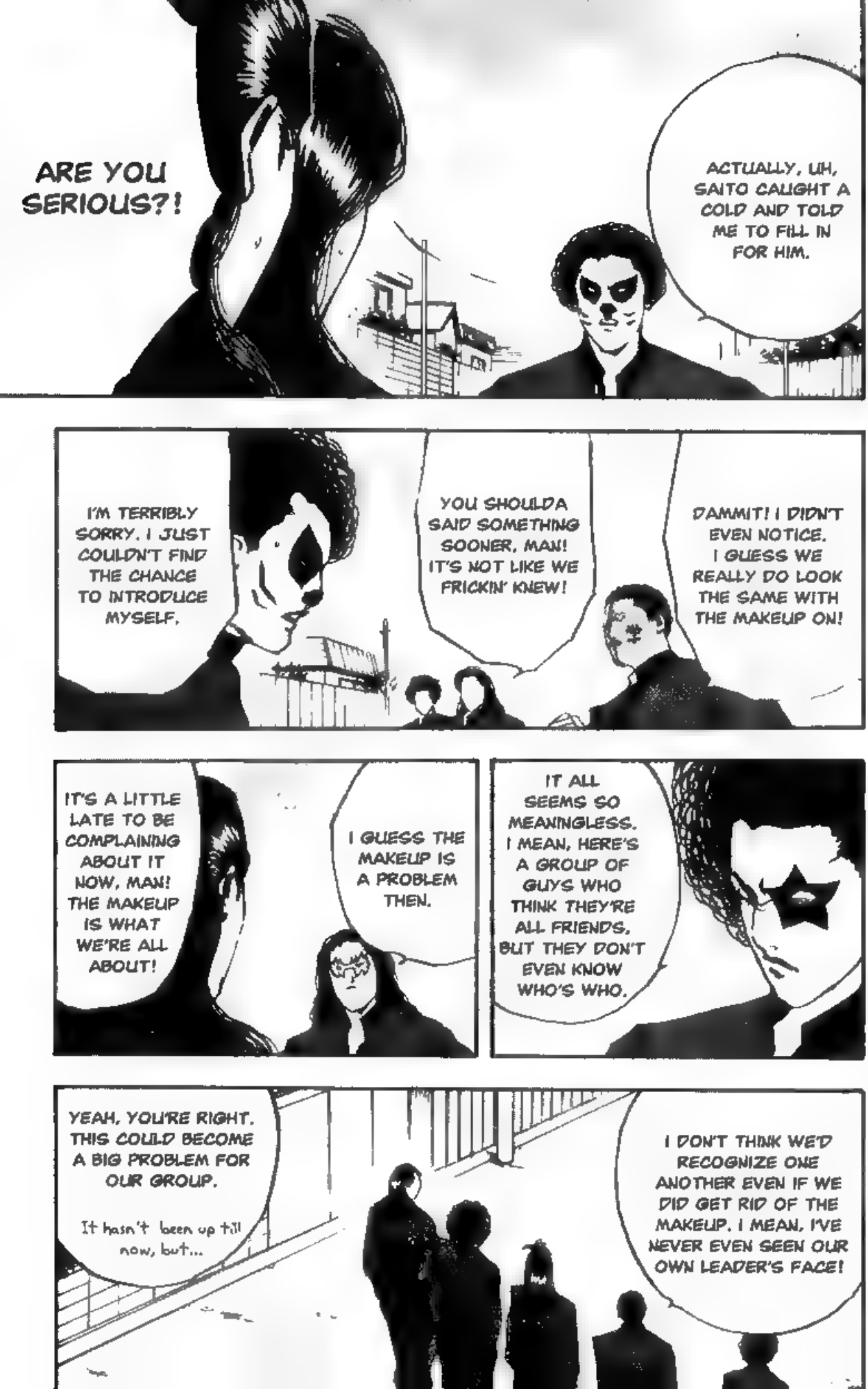
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR 1ST YEARS HAVE BEEN TAKING 'EM ON. I THINK THEY FORGOT ABOUT US.
AND WHY HAVEN'T WE SEEN THIS "DEMONIC DUO" OR WHATEVER?

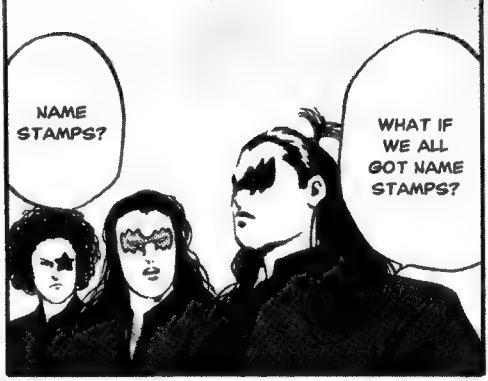

OUR 1ST YEARS SEEM TO THINK THEY RE-PRESENT OUR SCHOOL.
WHAT THE HELL? WHO DO THOSE IDIOTS THINK THEY ARE IGNORING US 2ND YEARS?!

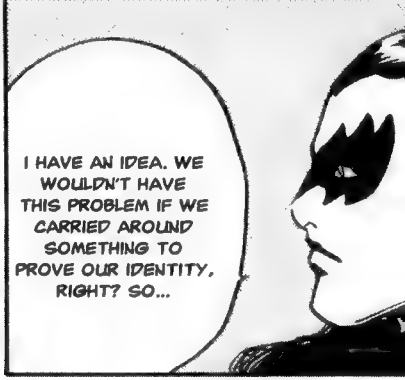
WE'VE BEEN HAVING A LOT OF LIGHT FARE RECENTLY, SO... HOW ABOUT CHINESE?
WHAT SHOULD WE EAT TODAY?
CROMARTIE 2ND YEAR STUDENTS
THE FOUR GREAT ONES
A FIVE OF THEM

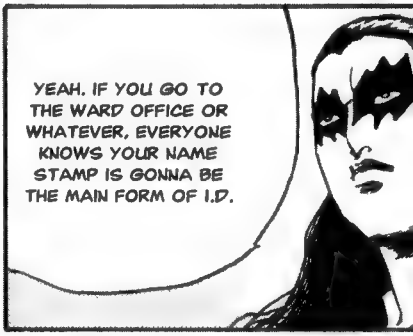
*ON FACE SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL


ANYWAY, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BEAT THE CONCEPT OF "RANK" INTO 'EM. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE TAKE OUT THE DEMONIC DUO AND OUR 1ST YEARS ALL AT ONCE?!


ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
ACTUALLY, UH, SAITO CAUGHT A COLD AND TOLD ME TO FILL IN FOR HIM.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY. I JUST COULDN'T FIND THE CHANCE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF.
YOU SHOULDA SAID SOMETHING SOONER, MAN! IT'S NOT LIKE WE FRICKIN' KNEW!
DAMMIT! I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE. I GUESS WE REALLY DO LOOK THE SAME WITH THE MAKEUP ON!
IT'S A LITTLE LATE TO BE COMPLAINING ABOUT IT NOW, MAN! THE MAKEUP IS WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT!
I GUESS THE MAKEUP IS A PROBLEM THEN.
IT ALL SEEMS SO MEANINGLESS. I MEAN, HERE'S A GROUP OF GUYS WHO THINK THEY'RE ALL FRIENDS, BUT THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO'S WHO.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS COULD BECOME A BIG PROBLEM FOR OUR GROUP.
It hasn't been up till now, but...
I DON'T THINK WE'D RECOGNIZE ONE ANOTHER EVEN IF WE DID GET RID OF THE MAKEUP. I MEAN, I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN OUR OWN LEADER'S FACE!

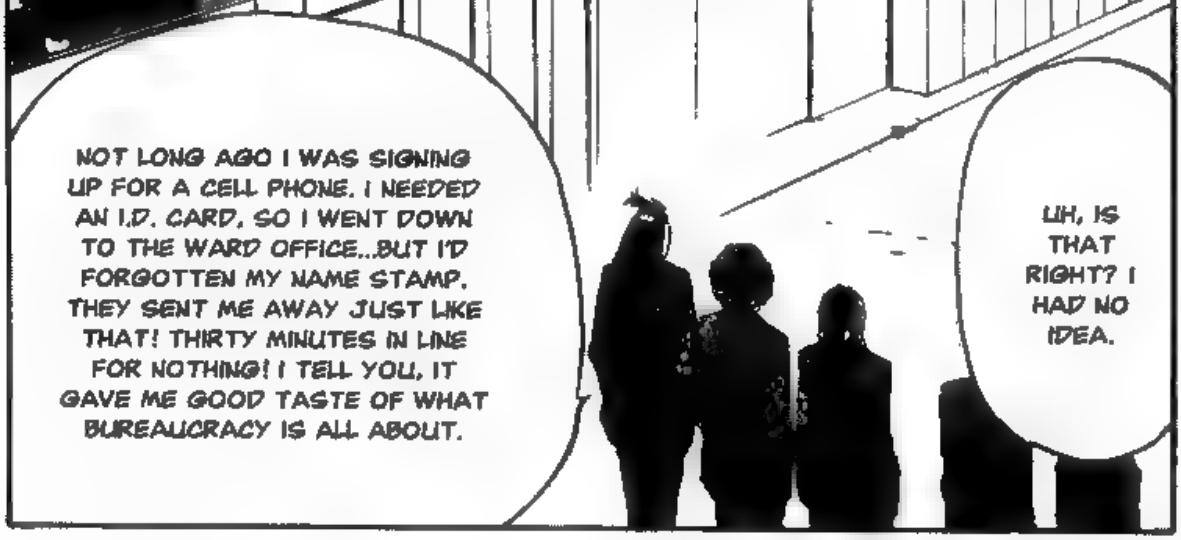




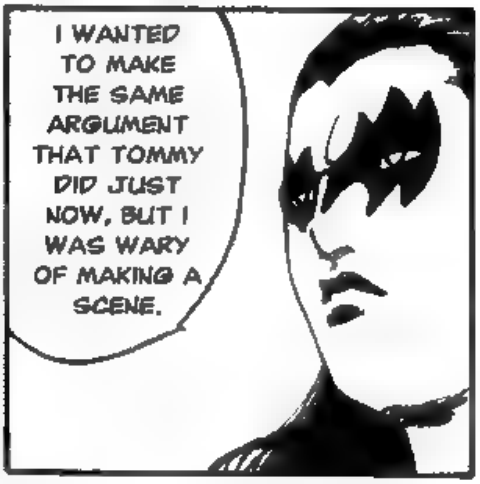


ARE YOU SAYING THAT SOMETHING WITH SO LITTLE CREDIBILITY COULD ACTUALLY BE OF USE TO **US**? YOU THINK WE FOUR GREAT ONES CAN PROVE OUR IDENTITIES WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
THEY SELL GENERIC NAME STAMPS FOR LIKE 300 YEN A PIECE, AND ANYONE CAN BUY THEM. SOME GUY NAMED YAMADA COULD BUY A STAMP THAT SAYS "SAITO" ON IT AND BAM! NOW HE'S SAITO!

*300 YEN = ABOUT $3 U.S.


NOT LONG AGO I WAS SIGNING UP FOR A CELL PHONE. I NEEDED AN I.D. CARD, SO I WENT DOWN TO THE WARD OFFICE...BUT I'D FORGOTTEN MY NAME STAMP. THEY SENT ME AWAY JUST LIKE THAT! THIRTY MINUTES IN LINE FOR NOTHING! I TELL YOU, IT GAVE ME GOOD TASTE OF WHAT BUREAUCRACY IS ALL ABOUT.
UH, IS THAT RIGHT? I HAD NO IDEA.

ARE YOU SURE IT WASN'T THE [illegible] THAT MADE THEM SEND YOU BACK?
WHAT?! YOU WORE THAT TO THE WARD OFFICE?!
PLUS, I HAD THIS MAKEUP ON.


I WANTED TO MAKE THE SAME ARGUMENT THAT TOMMY DID JUST NOW, BUT I WAS WARY OF MAKING A SCENE.

WELL IT'S BETTER THAN SOME STUPID NAME STAMP IDEA!
THERE'S NO REASON TO GO THAT FAR! YOU'RE A REAL HARD-ASS, AREN'T YOU?

ANYWAY, I THINK WE SHOULD ALL HAVE SOME FORM OF OFFICIAL I.D. THAT WE COULD CARRY WITH US AND SHOW WHENEVER WE MEET.

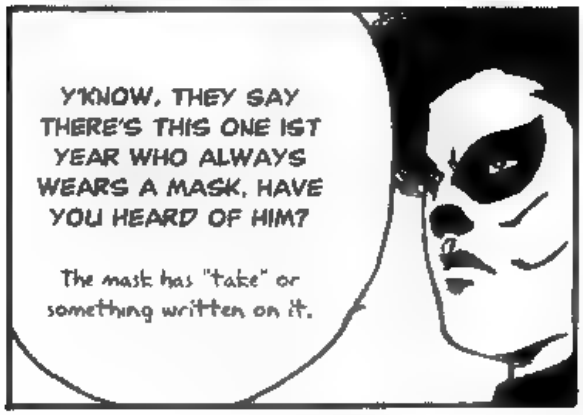
THE MORE WE ARGUE ABOUT THIS, THE MORE PERSONALLY EVERYONE IS GOING TO TAKE IT. I THINK WE SHOULD ASK A NEUTRAL THIRD PARTY.

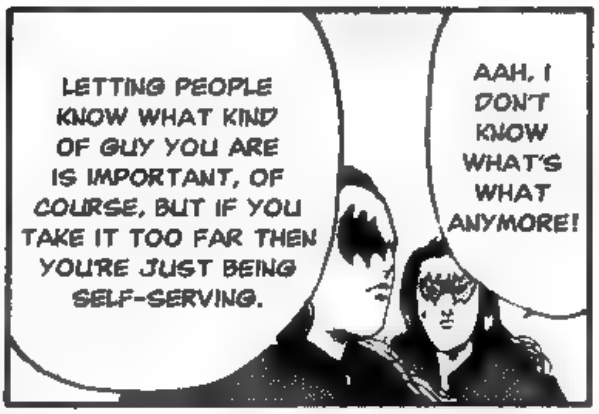
YOU AMERI-CANIZED SON OF A BITCH!
PERSONALLY, I THINK IT MAKES A LOT MORE SENSE TO GO BY SIGNATURE INSTEAD OF NAME STAMPS.

HUH? ME?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
LOOK, WE BADASSES LIVE FOR THE MOMENT, RIGHT? WE DON'T REALLY CARE WHAT WE DO, SO LONG AS IT'S FUN.
DOES IT MATTER? WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?!
HMM. WELL, I'VE HEARD A LOT OF DIFFERENT OPINIONS, BUT IN THE END DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHO'S WHO?
HEY, HOLD ON A SECOND!
I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK!
Well said, man.
WE DON'T WASTE TIME ASKIN' QUESTIONS LIKE "WHO ARE YOU?" IF SOMEONE IS THERE AND HAVIN' FUN WITH YOU, THEN THE ANSWER TO WHO THAT PERSON IS IS, "YOUR BUDDY." THAT'S ENOUGH

SAY THE OLD DUDE WHO RUNS THE BAKERY DOWN ON 2ND STREET PUTS ON THE SAME MAKEUP AS IGA-CHAN AND BECOMES OUR LEADER--I COULD SPEND THE WHOLE DAY TALKIN' TO SOME OLD BAKER LIKE HE WAS MY BUDDY!
YOU HAVE TO ASK WHO PEOPLE ARE!

IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM THE BAKER DUDE THINKING THAT I'M AN OK GUY, TOO.
AND WHAT IF I **WAS** AN OLD BAKER? IF IT TURNED OUT THAT I WAS A PRETTY FUN GUY, THEN WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?!


Y'KNOW, THEY SAY THERE'S THIS ONE 1ST YEAR WHO ALWAYS WEARS A MASK. HAVE YOU HEARD OF HIM?
The mask has "take" or something written on it.


LETTING PEOPLE KNOW WHAT KIND OF GUY YOU ARE IS IMPORTANT, OF COURSE, BUT IF YOU TAKE IT TOO FAR THEN YOU'RE JUST BEING SELF-SERVING.
AAH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WHAT ANYMORE!

YEAH...HANG ON A MINUTE, THOUGH.

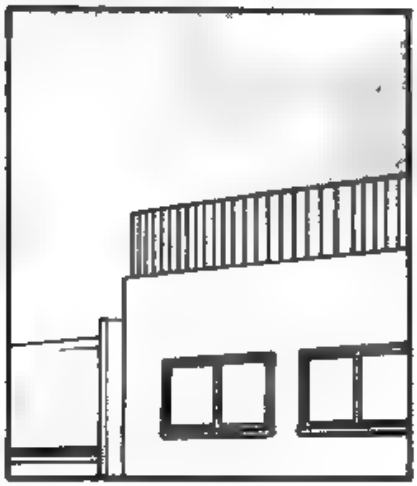
TELL ME ABOUT IT. WE'RE IN THE ERA OF ANONYMITY, MAN.
THAT GUY'S AMAZING! SOMEONE ELSE COULD TAKE HIS PLACE AND WE'D NEVER EVEN KNOW!

ANYWAY, ALL I'M SAYIN' IS THAT I'M THE KIND OF GUY WHO HAS TO LET PEOPLE KNOW EXACTLY WHO I AM!

DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO'S WHO?
S-SORRY, SIR!
YOU'RE JUST A 1ST YEAR! WHERE DO YOU GET OFF TALKIN' TO ME LIKE THAT, HUH?!

YOU'RE ONE HELL OF A SHOWOFF, YOU KNOW THAT?
Got that right.

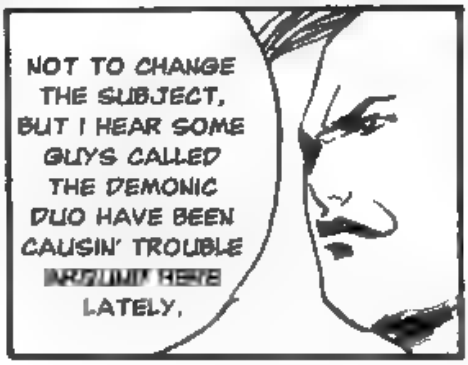
AM I THE ONLY ONE?



ALL OF 'EM ARE.

CHAPTER 115: **NEW SCHOOL ON MONDAY**

IT COULD HAVE BEEN REBUILT MUCH FASTER WITH THE AID OF THE HOKUTO FOUNDATION...BUT WE DECIDED NOT TO HELP.
NOW THAT EVERYTHING'S ALL FIXED UP, WE CAN FINALLY START GOIN' TO SCHOOL AGAIN.



ONE OF 'EM HAS SUNGLASSES AND SLICKED-BACK HAIR, AND THE OTHER ONE HAS A SHAVED HEAD.
SO WHAT ARE THESE DUDES LIKE?
OH? IT SEEMS SOME MORE FOOLS HAVE CRAWLED OUT OF THE WOODWORK.

TH-THE DEMONIC DUO!
YOU TALKIN' ABOUT US?
AH!

YEAH! I SAW 'EM BEAT THE HELL OUTTA SOME GUYS FROM MANUEL HIGH! THEY'RE BAD NEWS!
THIS IS THE DEMONIC DUO?

HUH?

WE'RE NOT LIKE OTHER SCHOOLS, MAN! WE GOT SOME DUDES HERE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE! IF YOU WANNA FIGHT, THEN LET'S GO!
DON'T THINK YOU CAN COME IN HERE AND SCREW WITH US!

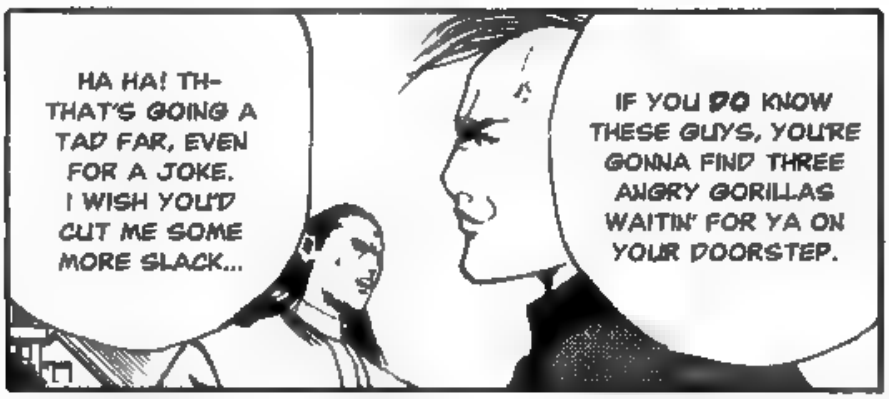
. . . .
HM?
HOKUTO-SAN?

HUH?

I WAS JUST THINKING I HADN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
G-GET OVER HERE!
WAIT!
UM... ABOUT WHAT?
HOKUTO-SAN, DON'T TELL ME YOU FORGOT!
SHHH! YOU'RE SPEAKING TOO LOUDLY. THEY MIGHT HEAR YOU.
SIX MONTHS AGO YOU ORDERED US TO "CRUSH ALL THE SCHOOLS IN TOKYO," REMEMBER?!
I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEY WERE THE DEMONIC DUO-- SIX MONTHS AGO THEY WERE THE "MUSCLE BROTHERS"! HOW FOOLISH OF ME TO NOT CONSIDER I MIGHT RUN INTO THESE TWO MORONS!
I COMPLETELY FORGOT. I DID ORDER THESE TWO TO GO OUT AND CONQUER THE WHOLE COUNTRY... OR SOMETHING.

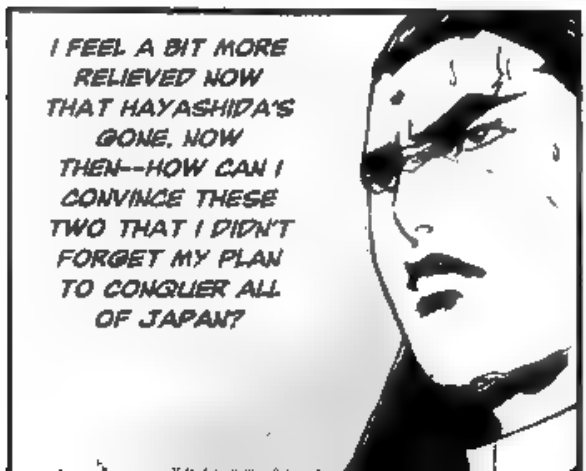
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? DO YOU KNOW THESE GUYS, HOKUTO?
NO, OF COURSE NOT! WHY WOULD I?

WHY DID IT TAKE YOU SIX MONTHS TO START CARRYING OUT YOUR ORDERS?
WE LIKE TO GET ALL THE GROUNDWORK TAKEN CARE OF FIRST. INVESTIGATING THAT GORILLA TOOK US AN ESPECIALLY LONG TIME.


IF YOU DO KNOW THESE GUYS, YOU'RE GONNA FIND THREE ANGRY GORILLAS WAITIN' FOR YA ON YOUR DOORSTEP.
HA HA! TH-THAT'S GOING A TAD FAR, EVEN FOR A JOKE. I WISH YOU'D CUT ME SOME MORE SLACK...

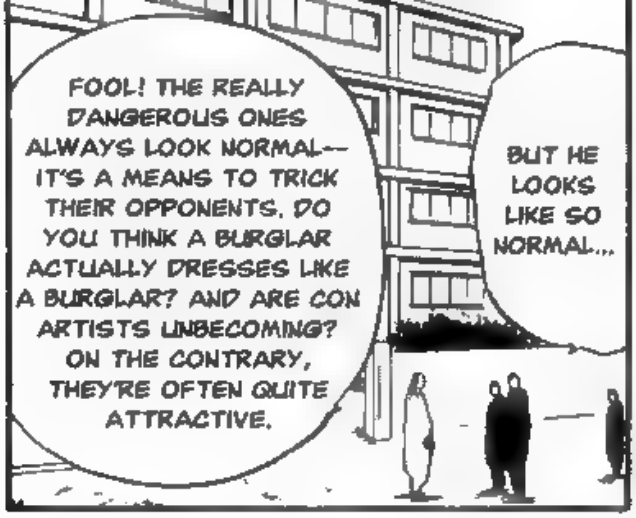
OH, WELL THAT'S OK THEN, BUT JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE...

ANYWAY, I DON'T WANT THIS TO CAUSE YOU GUYS ANY TROUBLE. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE TWO ON MY OWN! YOU ALL GO AHEAD TO SCHOOL. ESPECIALLY YOU, HAYASHIDA--YOU'VE MISSED SO MANY DAYS THAT YOU COULD BE IN DANGER OF FAILING.
THANKS, MAN. YOU'RE ALWAYS LOOKIN' OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS! JUST CALL ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, AND I'LL SEND A COUPLE GORILLAS OVER AS REINFORCEMENTS!


I FEEL A BIT MORE RELIEVED NOW THAT HAYASHIDA'S GONE. NOW THEN--HOW CAN I CONVINCE THESE TWO THAT I DIDN'T FORGET MY PLAN TO CONQUER ALL OF JAPAN?

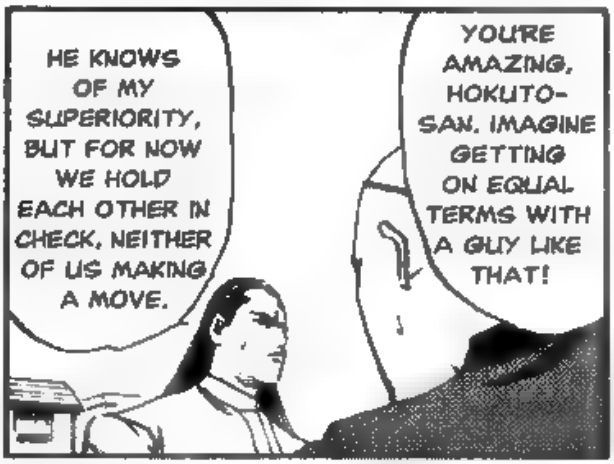
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, HOKUTO-SAN? I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
ALRIGHT, I'LL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU NICE AND SLOW.

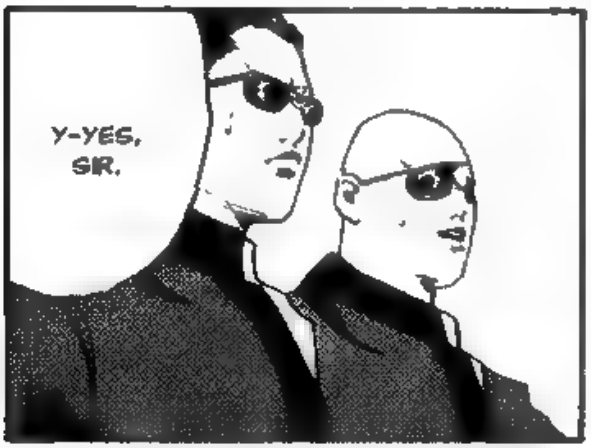
ANOTHER ANNOY-ANCE!
HEY THERE, HOKUTO-KUN.
HUH?
NO, OF COURSE NOT!
I MEAN, THERE'S NO WAY YOU'D BE BUDDIES WITH THIS PIPSQUEAK, RIGHT,
[redacted]
WHO'S THIS PANSY?! AND HE CALLED YOU HOKUTO-KUN, LIKE HE'S YOUR EQUAL OR SOMETHIN'! HASN'T ANYONE PUT THE FEAR OF THE HOKUTO CORPS INTO HIM?!
FINE, I'LL JUST HAVE TO HANDLE IT THE WAY I ALWAYS DO--BY COMING UP WITH A STORY TO DECEIVE THEM!
DAMN. IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING, I'LL LOOK LIKE A COWARD AND LOSE MY POSITION AS LEADER OF THE HOKUTO CORPS...BUT IF ANYONE FINDS OUT THAT I KNOW THESE GUYS, IT'S GOING TO MAKE THINGS PRETTY DIFFICULT FOR ME HERE. HNGRH! I CAN'T THINK OF HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS!
THAT GUY THERE IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME...
HUH?
ALRIGHT, NOW LISTEN UP!


FOOL! THE REALLY DANGEROUS ONES ALWAYS LOOK NORMAL— IT'S A MEANS TO TRICK THEIR OPPONENTS. DO YOU THINK A BURGLAR ACTUALLY DRESSES LIKE A BURGLAR? AND ARE CON ARTISTS UNBECOMING? ON THE CONTRARY, THEY'RE OFTEN QUITE ATTRACTIVE.
BUT HE LOOKS LIKE SO NORMAL...

HE'S ALREADY KILLED TWO MEN.
FOR REAL?!

NOW THEN, I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE BEEN GOING AROUND AND STIRRING UP TROUBLE, BUT I NEED YOU TO HOLD OFF UNTIL I SAY OTHERWISE.
Wait till things cool down around here.


HE KNOWS OF MY SUPERIORITY, BUT FOR NOW WE HOLD EACH OTHER IN CHECK, NEITHER OF US MAKING A MOVE.
YOU'RE AMAZING, HOKUTO-SAN. IMAGINE GETTING ON EQUAL TERMS WITH A GUY LIKE THAT!


Y-YES, SIR.

AND FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, STAY AWAY FROM THAT KAMIYAMA OR YOU'LL GET BURNED!
If they learn he's a weakling, I'm screwed.

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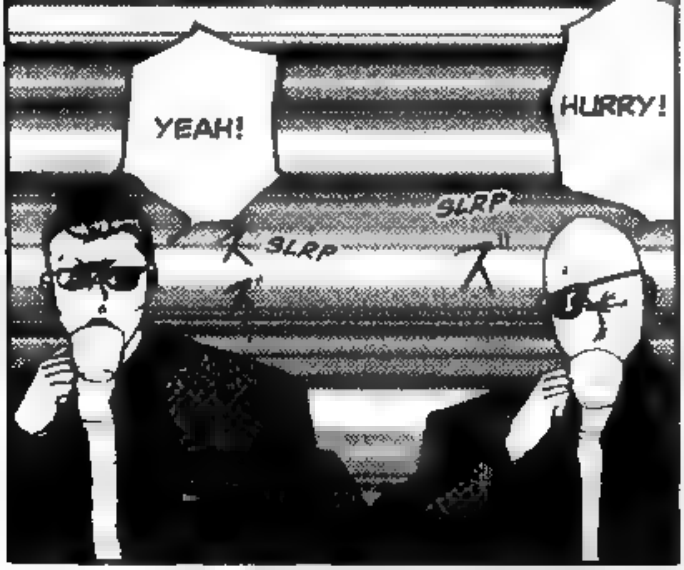
COFFEE

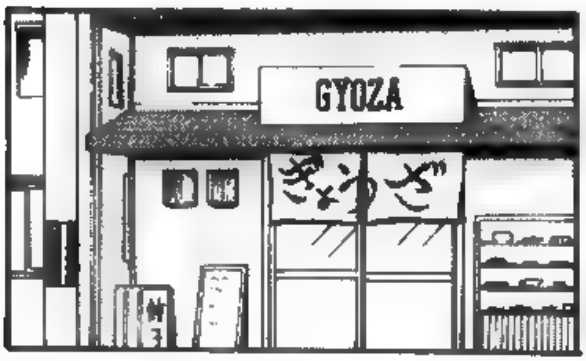
YEAH. I CAN'T REALLY PICTURE HIM BEING AS BAD AS ALL THAT...
I KNOW HOKUTO-SAN SAID NOT TO, BUT I CAN'T LEAVE THIS GUY ALONE.
SHLP
SHLP
SPLT
SWP
WHAT IS IT?
GAH! LOOK!
YEAH. "KNOW YOUR ENEMY" IS THE FIRST RULE OF WAR.
WHY DON'T WE TRY THAT, TOO?
IT'S LIKE THAT WRAPPER IS ALIVE!
WHAT THE HELL?
DAMMIT! THIS GUY'S NO CHUMP AFTER ALL! WE GOTTA FIND HIM!
HE DISAP-PEARED!



JUST LIKE HE SAID.

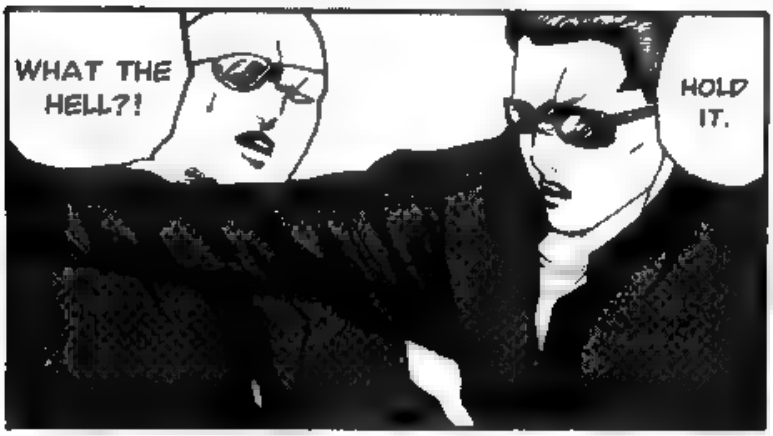
CHAPTER 116: THEY ARE RED HOT

NO KIDDING. HE'S GOT SOME BRASS ONES IF HE THINKS HE CAN MAKE MONKEYS OUTTA THE DEMONIC DUO!
DAMMIT! THAT KAMIYAMA GUY TRIES TO PULL ONE OVER ON US, WILL HE?!



HUH? WELL, IF WE GOT NO CHOICE... WHERE IS IT?
I'M SORRY, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY TABLES AVAILABLE. WOULD YOU MIND SITTING WITH ANOTHER PARTY?

WHAT?!
RIGHT HERE, SIR.
HAVE A SEAT.

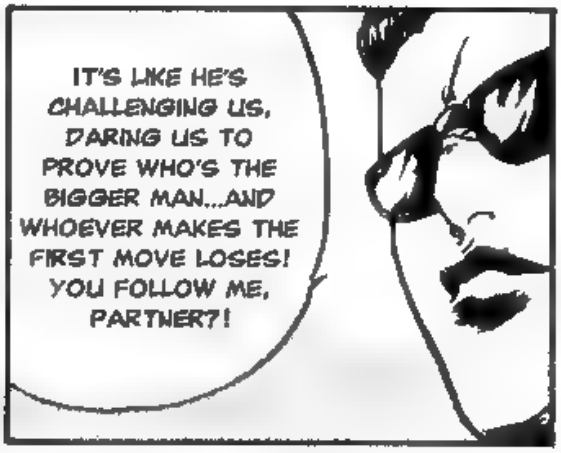

WHAT THE HELL?!
HOLD IT.

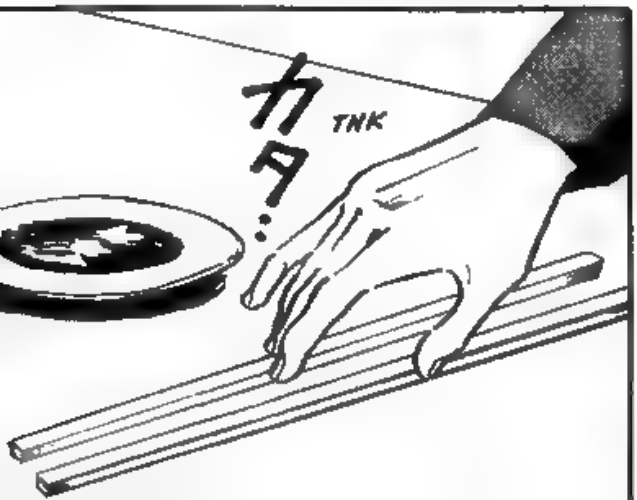
IT'S THAT SON OF A BITCH AGAIN! I'M GONNA FINISH HIS ASS RIGHT NOW!

DON'T WORRY. WE'RE GONNA GET THIS KAMIYAMA GUY, BUT NOW'S NOT THE TIME. OUR FUN CAN WAIT TILL LATER.
YOU FLY OFF THE HANDLE WAY TOO EASILY, MAN--AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO DO.

YOU'RE TELLIN' ME! HE'S JUST EATING THAT GYOZA LIKE HE HASN'T GOT A CARE IN THE WORLD. I BET HE'S THINKIN' MORE ABOUT THE GYOZA THAN US!
LOOK AT THAT ASSHOLE, SITTIN' THERE AND ACTIN' ALL CALM. THIS GUY'S GOT SOME GUTS, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT.

HERE YOU GO. TWO ORDERS OF GYOZA.
WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE IT EASY AND EAT OUR MEAL?
SORRY. I OUGHTTA KNOW BETTER THAN TO GO OFF LIKE THAT.


IT'S LIKE HE'S CHALLENGING US, DARING US TO PROVE WHO'S THE BIGGER MAN...AND WHOEVER MAKES THE FIRST MOVE LOSES! YOU FOLLOW ME, PARTNER?!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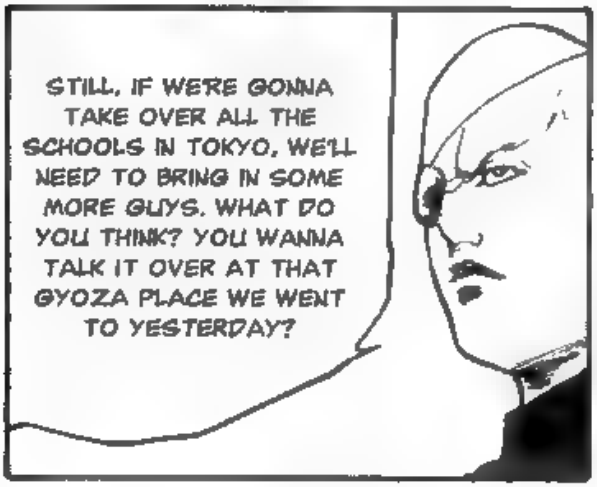
UH, NO-THING.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BRO?
THESE THINGS ARE HOT!
DAMN THESE THINGS! I'M THE ONE WHO SAID WE SHOULD JUST CALM DOWN AND EAT, BUT THERE'S NO WAY I CAN EAT SOMETHING THIS HOT!
BESIDES, MY PRIDE WON'T LET ME COMPLAIN OVER SOMETHIN' LIKE GYOZA IN FRONT OF THESE GUYS!
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE ASKIN' SOMETHING STUPID LIKE, "SAY, DO YOU THINK THESE ARE A LITTLE HOT?"
IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION. THE OUTSIDE IS HOT, BUT INSIDE IT'S NICE AND COOL...
CRUNCH
HM!
AFTER ALL, I'M STRONGER THAN EITHER OF 'EM WHEN IT COMES TO FIGHTING, SO...
ANYWAY, THESE TWO DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY'RE HAVING ANY TROUBLE EATING... AND IF THEY CAN DO IT, THEN SO CAN I.

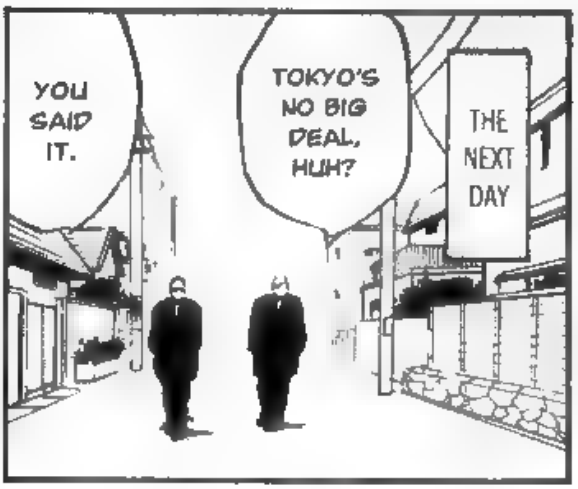
HEY, PARTNER, I'M THINKING IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA NOT TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME CONQUERING TOKYO.
I GUESS BEING STRONG IN A FIGHT HAS GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH BEING ABLE TO EAT HOT GYOZA.
NOPE. IT REALLY IS HOT!
YOU KNOW, I DON'T EVEN CARE ABOUT [redacted] TOKYO ANYMORE. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I CARE ABOUT--THESE STUPID HOT GYOZA!
IT'S NO GOOD. THIS THING IS SO HOT THAT I COULDN'T CATCH WHAT HE WAS SAYING!
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
[redacted] WE STAY, THE MORE [redacted] THERE IS THAT SOMEONE WILL TRY AND FIGHT BACK.
HOLD ON A SECOND. I CAN'T BE THE ONLY ONE WHO THINKS THIS STUFF IS HOT. THESE GUYS MUST HAVE FIGURED OUT SOME WAY SO THAT THEY CAN EAT THEM.
WHAT IS THEIR SECRET?!

YOU POUR SOME OF THAT SOY SAUCE OR SESAME OIL ON THE GYOZA TO COOL 'EM OFF!
A-HA! IT'S THE SAUCE!
WHAT A BUNCH OF KIDS. TRYIN' TO PULL THE WOOL OVER MY EYES LIKE THAT...THE FRICKIN' MORONS!
YEAH, NOW I GET IT. ONCE YOU KNOW THE SECRET IT'S NO BIG DEAL. I'LL SHOW YOU TWO!
I USED WAY TOO MUCH SESAME OIL...AND IF I'D THOUGHT ABOUT IT A BIT MORE, I WOULD'VE REALIZED THERE'S NO REASON THAT SESAME OIL WOULD MAKE MY GYOZA ANY COOLER! THESE THINGS ARE SO HOT THAT I'M LOSIN' MY ABILITY TO REASON! WATER...I NEED WATER!
NOW IT'S SPICY AND HOT!
MAN, I'M THIRSTY! ARE THE WAITERS HERE THICK OR WHAT? HEY!
STILL, I GOTTA WATCH MYSELF. I CAN'T SAY SOMETHIN' LIKE, "COULD I HAVE SOME WATER, PLEASE? THIS IS KINDA HOT." I'LL JUST SAY THAT I'M THIRSTY. WHY DOESN'T THIS DAMN RESTAURANT GIVE YOU WATER WITH YOUR FOOD ANYWAY?!

IT'S HOT TEA!
K-TNK
HERE YOU GO, SIR.

AH! I'LL BRING YOU SOMETHING RIGHT NOW.
YEAH, YOU DO THAT


STILL, IF WE'RE GONNA TAKE OVER ALL THE SCHOOLS IN TOKYO, WE'LL NEED TO BRING IN SOME MORE GUYS. WHAT DO YOU THINK? YOU WANNA TALK IT OVER AT THAT GYOZA PLACE WE WENT TO YESTERDAY?


YOU SAID IT.
TOKYO'S NO BIG DEAL, HUH?
THE NEXT DAY

HELLO

HM?
HEY.

UH...LET'S TRY A DIFFERENT GYOZA SHOP TODAY.

ALRIGHT THEN, YOU SON OF A BITCH! WHAT IS IT?!

IF YOU HAVE A MOMENT, THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.
KAMI-YAMA!

IS IT JUST ME, OR WERE THOSE GYOZA YESTERDAY RATHER HOT?
HUH?! YOU THOUGHT THEY WERE HOT, TOO?

YOU SHOULDA SAID SOMETHING, DAMMIT!

NO KIDDING.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOME NEW CHARACTERS

THE DEMONIC DUO

TAKURO YOSHIDA & YOSUI INOUE

You may have thought you've seen these two somewhere before, in which case, you probably have they appeared in *Kacho Baka Ichidai* as a couple of industrial spies who put Yagami, the main character, through the wringer. Or rather, they themselves were put through the wringer We haven't seen these two since *Kacho Baka Ichidai* ended its run, so both the editor and yours truly experienced a wave of nostalgia at seeing them back in action This time they appear as leading members of the Hokuto Corps (it really exists?!), taking on the kind of "tough guy" persona you don't often see in this manga. You'll find that they still get taken for rides somewhat like they did—or rather, *exactly* like they did in *Kacho* It appears that before they were the Demonic Duo they were known as the "Muscle Brothers." (I get the feeling I've heard that name somewhere before...) Another way they differ from the norm in this manga is that they actually prove they're good fighters, making short work of the top thugs at Bass High. This got some of the younger *Cromartie* fans rather disturbed inciting exclamations of, "Hey, this ain't what *Cromartie* is all about!" (Actually, this never happened.) In any event, you have my word that the whole thing was just a setup to the joke that these two characters really are Speaking of which the fact that their introduction caused Kamiyama, our protagonist, to disappear for quite some time (seven weeks in serialization) was a source of controversy as well as consternation People actually started to notice after about the fourth week. For the almost two months that Kamiyama failed to make an appearance, this author and his editor would exchange such meaningful dialogues as, "Hm. Still no main character, huh?" "Nope What should we do?" "Ah, who cares?" "Yeah " Look, there just weren't any good spots in the story for him to show up in, alright?! Anyway, both Yoshida and Inoue enjoy listening to folk songs, which should come as no surprise.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOME NEW CHARACTERS

TAKESHI KANESHIRO

Leader of the 1st-year students at Bernazard High School and a friend of Takenouchi since childhood (the two went to the same elementary school) Though he shares Takenouchi's weakness in being prone to motion sickness, he is currently the leader of a motorcycle gang, the reason for which is explained in the story If I keep writing about this kind of stuff I'm sure someone will eventually get angry, but it's so funny that I can't help myself Still, it's a little shocking to see a character refer to Takenouchi as "bro " Incidentally, when Kaneshiro's introductory story was published serially, all eight pages of it were done in glorious dichromatic color as part of a half-assed attempt at getting fancy. Author Eiji Nonaka reached new heights by putting the main character on the back burner to bring out this guy .who, as it turns out, wasn't very popular with readers (LOL)! Kaneshiro's favorite band is the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Huh?

MASASHI SADA

Leader of the Hokuto Corps and the most ferocious character in this manga He is considered to be an extremely powerful fighter His nickname is "Hell's Cook" (which makes you wonder what kind of student he is), the meaning behind which will be made clear as the story progresses Though a member of the Hokuto Corps, he's actually after Hokuto's position as head of the organization We recommend that you not ask him, "In that case, why did you *join* the Corps?" No mere thug, Sada can (apparently) exhibit unparalleled self-control With the introduction of this character, we learn that the Hokuto Corps' upper organizational structure is conciliar; if Hokuto were the president then the guys below him would be his board of directors. This is a good setup, because it makes enough sense that the reader can say, "Ah, so that's why the Hokuto Corps can function even when Hokuto isn't around." Sada s favorite song is "Kanpaku Sengen " Uh, is that right?

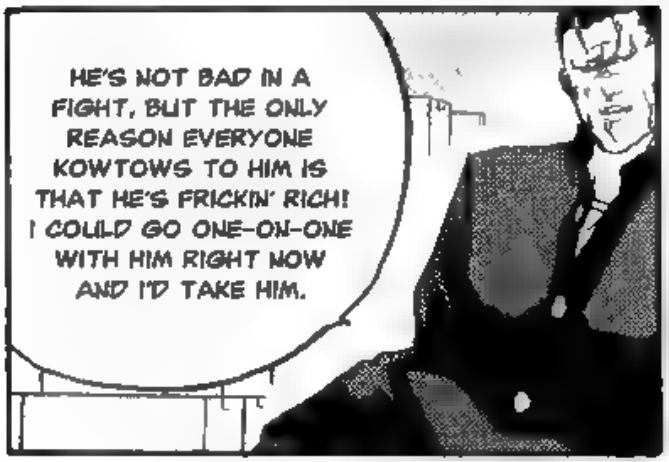
CHAPTER 117: **VERY QUIET RIOT**

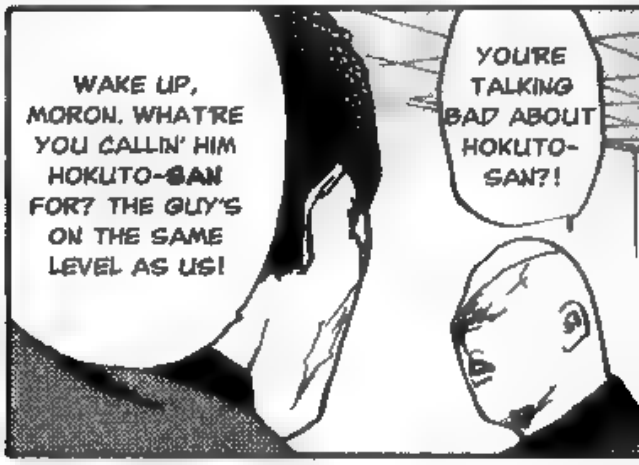
HOKUTO CORPS MEETING
STORAGE ROOM
HEH, HEH. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WAITIN' FOR?
TAKURO YOSHIDA
YOSUI INOUE
WHEN SADA GOES ON A RAMPAGE HIS POWER IS IMMEASURABLE--NONE CAN TOUCH HIM HIS RUTHLESSNESS IN BATTLE HAS EARNED HIM THE MONIKER "HELL'S COOK," AS WELL AS THE RESPECT OF HOKUTO HIMSELF
MASASHI SADA HIS FEROCIOUS DISPOSITION HAS EARNED HIM THE NO 2 SEAT IN THE HOKUTO CORPS.

YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW THIS, BUT CROMARTIE'S GONNA BE A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK. HOKUTO-SAN THINKS IT'D BE A BAD IDEA TO GO RUSHIN' IN HALF-COCKED...AND WE'RE HIS TROOPS, SO WE DO WHAT HE SAYS.
HOKUTO-SAN TOLD US TO HOLD BACK FOR NOW.

HEH. SEEMS TO ME THAT HOKUTO'S TURNED INTO A REAL COWARD SINCE I LAST SAW HIM.

SNF


HE'S NOT BAD IN A FIGHT, BUT THE ONLY REASON EVERYONE KOWTOWS TO HIM IS THAT HE'S FRICKIN' RICH! I COULD GO ONE-ON-ONE WITH HIM RIGHT NOW AND I'D TAKE HIM.


WAKE UP, MORON. WHAT'RE YOU CALLIN' HIM HOKUTO-SAN FOR? THE GUY'S ON THE SAME LEVEL AS US!
YOU'RE TALKING BAD ABOUT HOKUTO-SAN?!

YOU THINK YOU COULD SAY THAT TO HIS FACE, SADA?

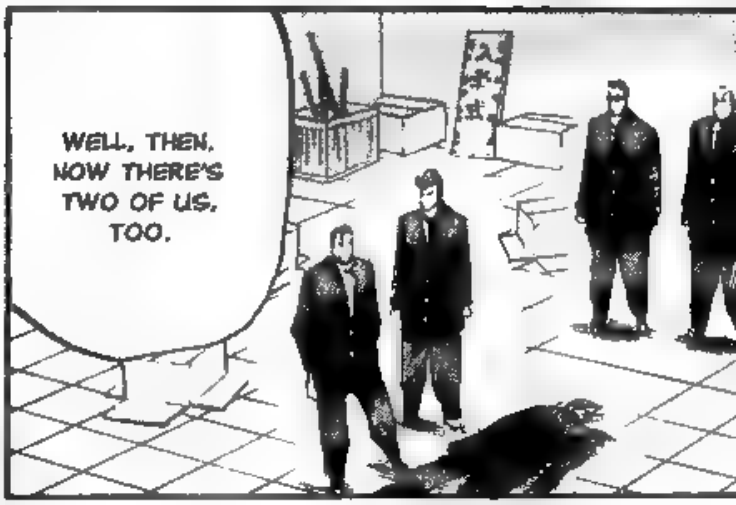
MAYBE I SHOULD.
WHY DON'T Y'ALL TRY BACKIN' UP SADA FOR A CHANGE?
IT'S NOT JUST HOKUTO, IS IT? LOOKS LIKE THESE GUYS'VE TURNED INTO A BUNCH OF WIMPS, TOO!
YOU'RE ALWAYS QUIET UNLESS YOU'RE WITH SADA. AND THEN THERE'S NO SHUTTIN' YOU UP. MAYBE IT'S TIME TO KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO YA.
HUH?
WHAT'S YOUR LITTLE CANDY ASS GETTIN' ALL EXCITED OVER?
HEH. YEAH...
HEY, SADA-KUN, THESE GUYS ARE ASKIN' FOR IT. LET'S GET 'EM!
SHUT UP, PISSANT! THIS HAS GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH YOU!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?

THWOK
URGH!

.....

.....
!!

.....
TWO ON TWO... THAT'S A FAIR FIGHT, RIGHT?


WELL, THEN. NOW THERE'S TWO OF US, TOO.

GOOD. LET'S GO NUTS AN' BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER.

Y-YOU'RE GONNA GO UP AGAINST HOKUTO-SAN?!
YOU STILL DON'T GET IT, HUH? ALRIGHT, STARTIN' TODAY, I'M THE LEADER OF THE HOKUTO CORPS.
JUST WHAT ARE YOU AFTER, SADA?
NOT SO FAST! I HEARD EVERYTHING YOU JUST SAID.
I AIN'T HIS LAP DOG! AND I'M SPLITTING UP THE CORPS-- HALF THE TOP-LEVEL STAFF HAS ALREADY COME OVER TO MY SIDE. NOW IF I CAN JUST TAKE HOKUTO OUT OF THE PICTURE, THE ENTIRE CORPS WOULD BE MINE.
WHO ARE YOU?
HM?
YOU SCUMBAGS HAVE A LOT OF NERVE, TALKING TRASH LIKE THAT. BUT LEMME TELL YOU, THERE WON'T BE ANY SPLITTING UP OF THE HOKUTO CORPS SO LONG AS I'M AROUND!
HUH?!
I-IT'S YOU!
HUH?!
HEH. COME ON, NOW. DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THIS FACE.

YOU FORGOT IT AGAIN?!
WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?
I remember the face, but...
UH...

SO YOU FINALLY SHOW YOURSELF.
HOKUTO-SAN!
S-SIR.
STAND BACK.

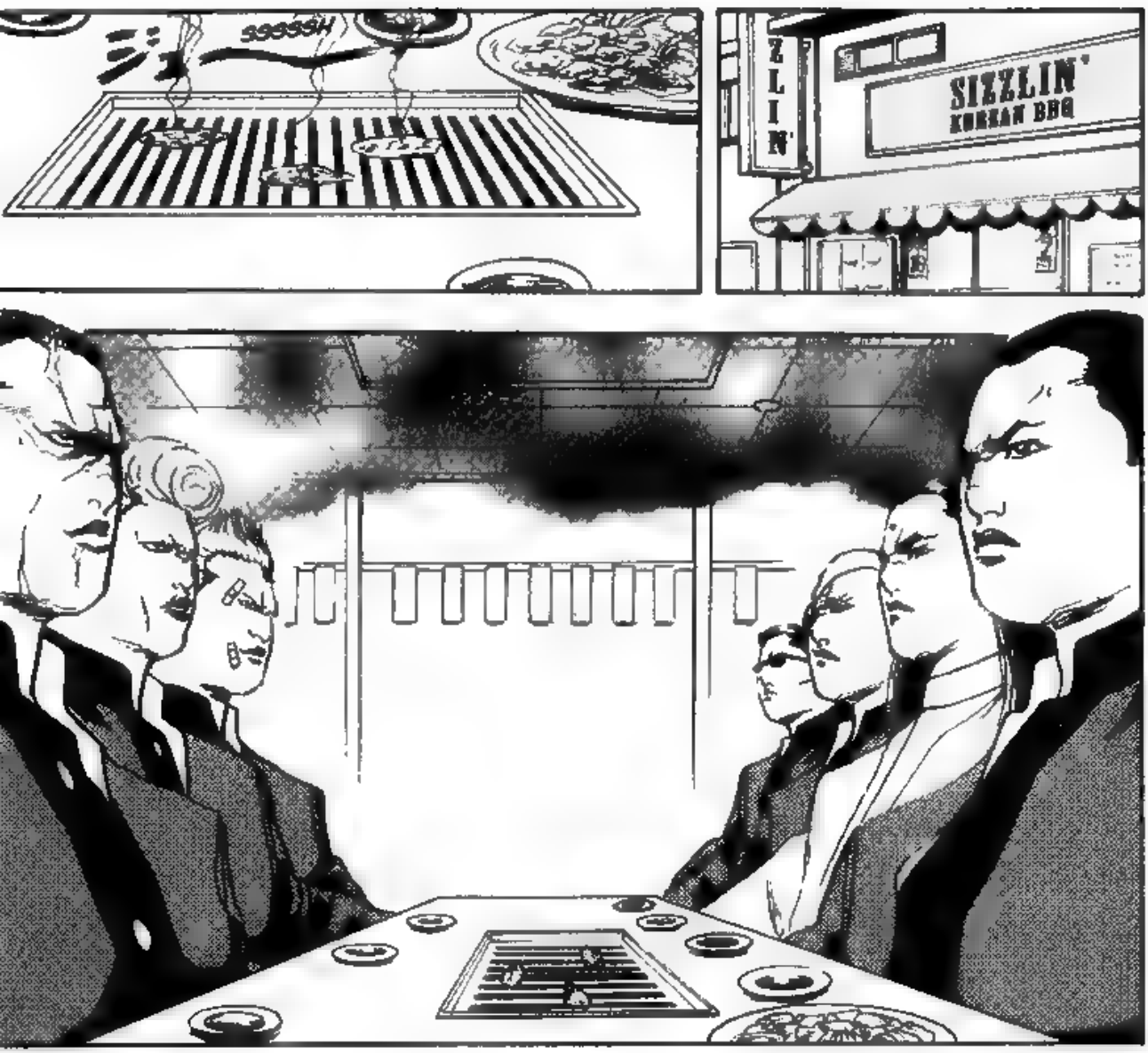
HEH. [redacted] AS GOOD AS MINE!
BUT LET'S SAY YOU DO TAKE ME DOWN-- DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT CROMARTIE, TOO?
TRYING TO STAB ME IN THE BACK, EH? YOU'VE GOTTEN RATHER BOLD, HAVEN'T YOU, SADA?

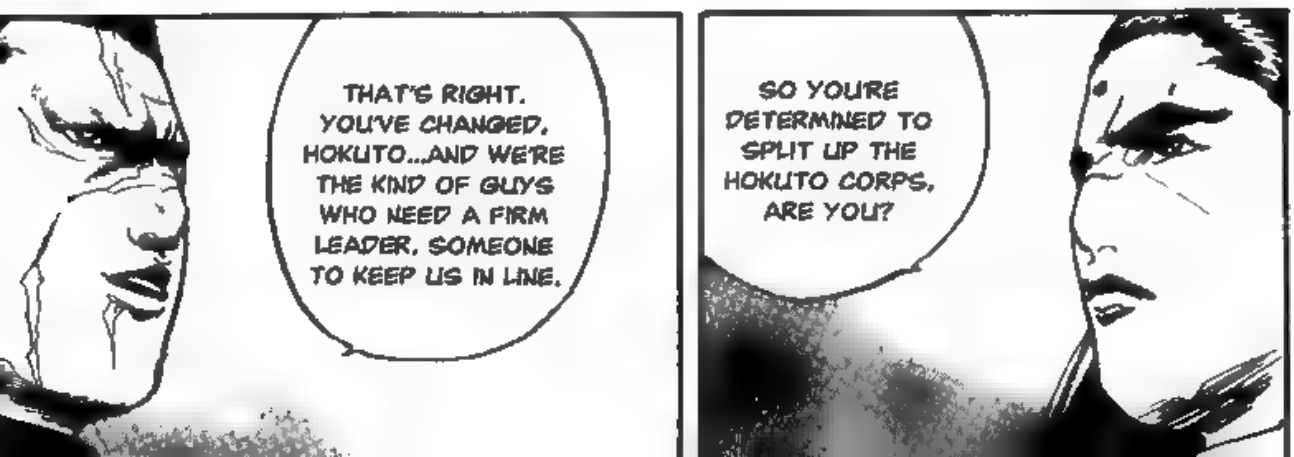
THAT HIGH-AND-MIGHTY ATTITUDE OF YOURS REALLY PISSES ME OFF. HEAR THIS, HOKUTO--I'VE ALREADY MADE SOME WILD ALLIES AT CROMARTIE. I CAN CRUSH THAT SCHOOL AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE!
OH? THE TRUTH, SADA, IS YOU'RE UNFIT TO LEAD... AND MEN WHO DON'T KNOW THEIR PLACE ARE PATHETIC.
ガラララ
RATTLE
C'MON IN!
IN FACT, THEY'RE HERE RIGHT NOW. LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO 'EM.
WHAT?! WHEN DID YOU...
BANA-NAS.
STILL, HOW DID YOU GET 'EM ALL UNDER YOUR CONTROL?
YEAH... THOSE GUYS SURE ARE WILD!
GAH! GORILLAS!
OOGA.
A TRO-PICAL FRUIT ONE-TWO PUNCH!
PINE-APPLES?!
YEAH. AND PINE-APPLES.
BUT THAT'S WHAT WE USED! YOU MEAN YOU CAN TAME 'EM WITH BANANAS?
BANA-NAS?!

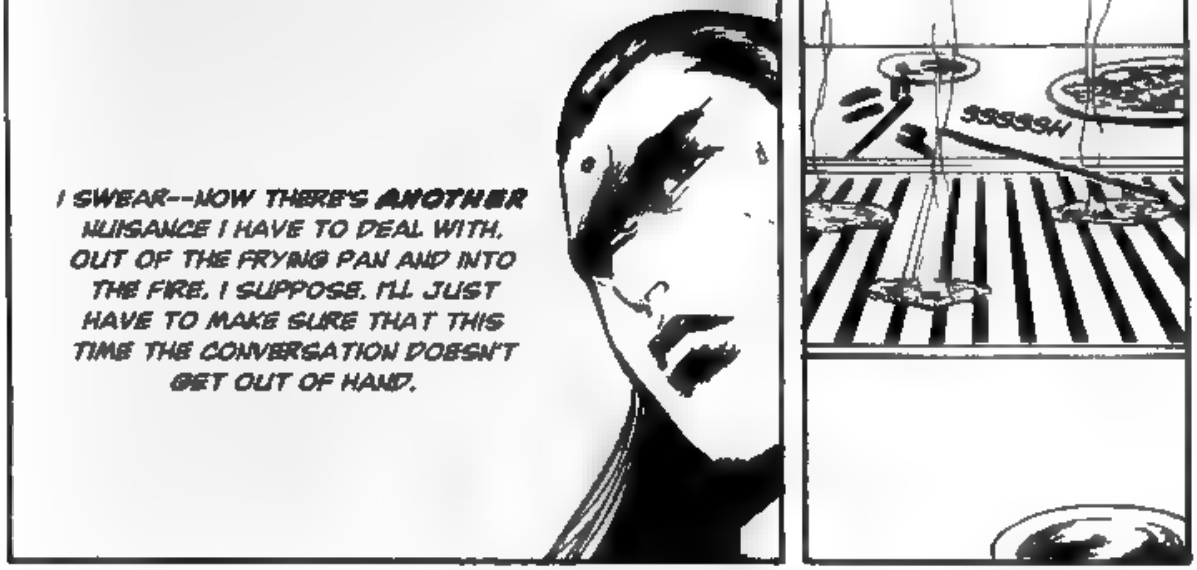
HUH? WHAT'S THAT?
THAT'S RATHER IMPRESSIVE FOR THE LIKES OF YOU, SADA. HOWEVER, THERE [redacted] I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW.
WHAT THE HELL ARE WE GONNA DO WITH ANOTHER GORILLA?
HE'S RIGHT! THERE'S FOUR OF 'EM NOW!
NO WAY!
THERE ARE ONLY THREE GORILLAS AT OUR SCHOOL.

AGAIN?

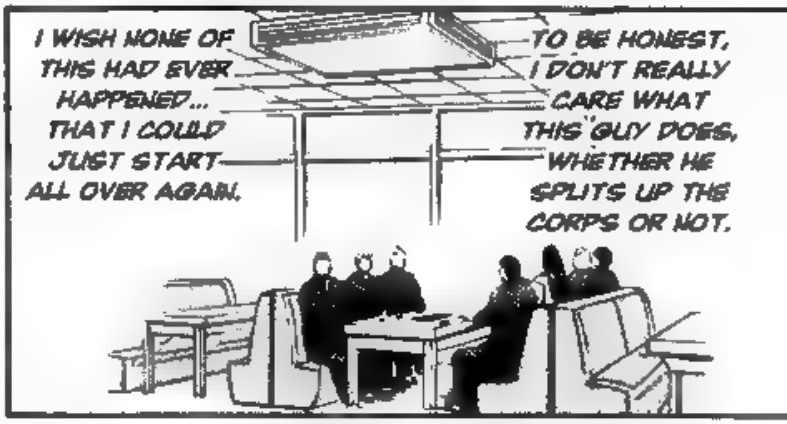
CHAPTER 118: **MEAT MEAT MEAT**



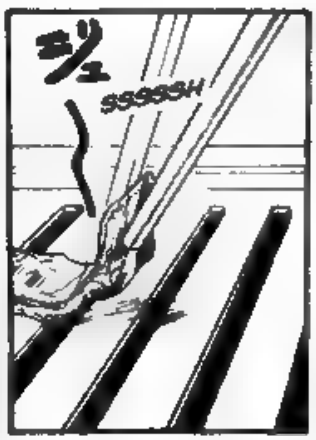

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'VE CHANGED, HOKUTO...AND WE'RE THE KIND OF GUYS WHO NEED A FIRM LEADER, SOMEONE TO KEEP US IN LINE.
SO YOU'RE DETERMINED TO SPLIT UP THE HOKUTO CORPS, ARE YOU?


I SWEAR--NOW THERE'S ANOTHER NUISANCE I HAVE TO DEAL WITH. OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND INTO THE FIRE, I SUPPOSE. I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT THIS TIME THE CONVERSATION DOESN'T GET OUT OF HAND.
SSSSSH

HOWEVER, AS LEADER OF THE HOKUTO CORPS, I HAVE MY PRIDE TO CONSIDER. SADA'S BRAZENNESS SIMPLY CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED.

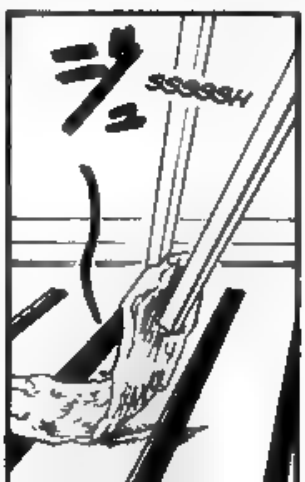

I WISH NONE OF THIS HAD EVER HAPPENED... THAT I COULD JUST START ALL OVER AGAIN.
TO BE HONEST, I DON'T REALLY CARE WHAT THIS GUY DOES, WHETHER HE SPLITS UP THE CORPS OR NOT.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO? IT'S NOT LIKE WE'D MISS YOUR SORRY ASS.


SSSSSH

Y'KNOW, SADA, IF YOU REALLY WANNA GO...

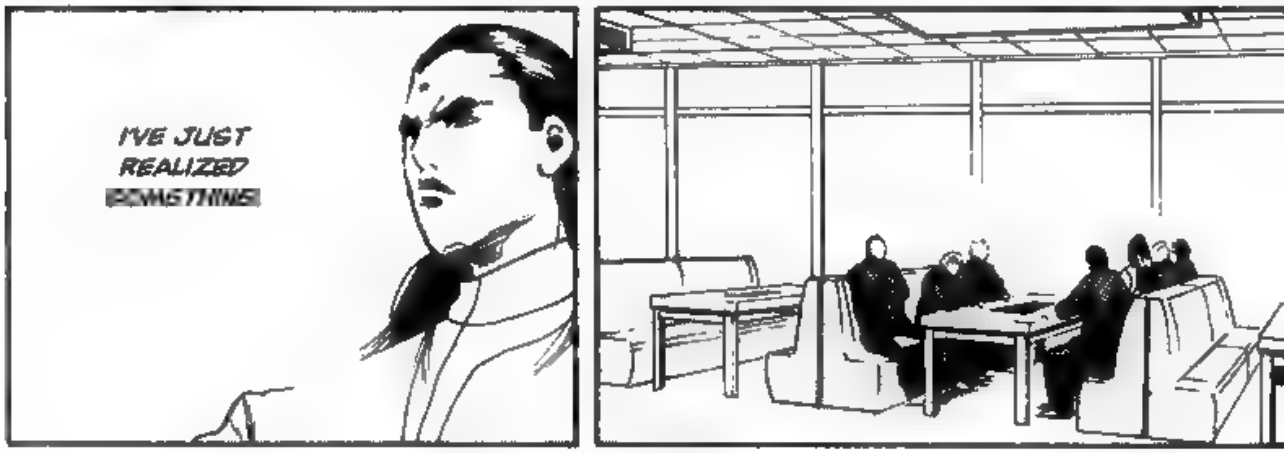
WE CAME HERE TO TALK TO HOKUTO. SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHUT THE HELL UP?

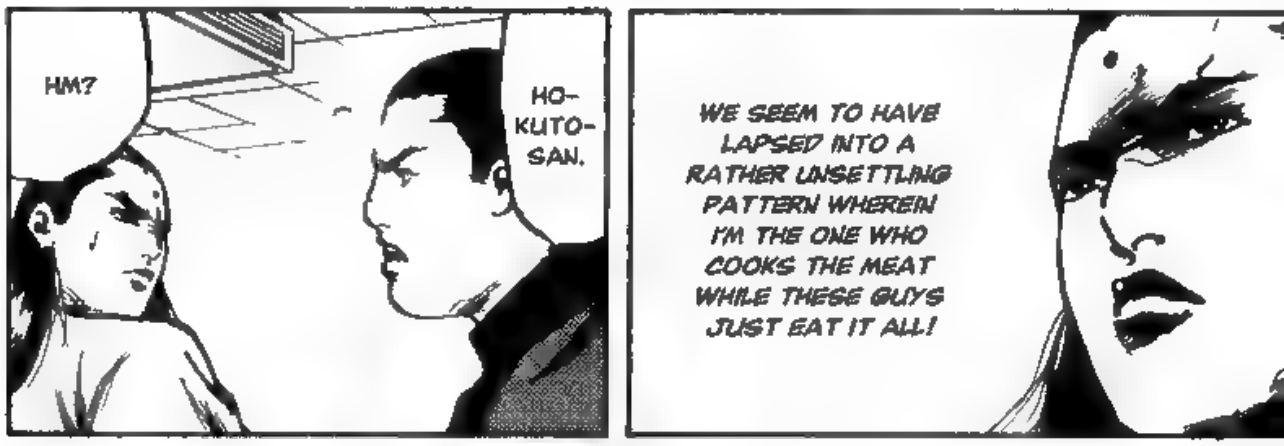

SSSSSH

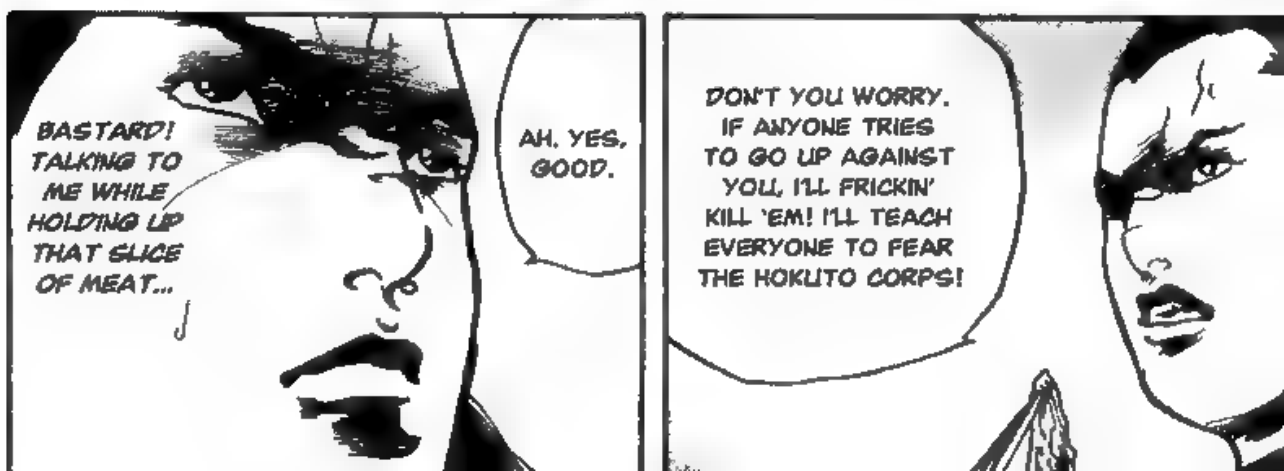
NOBODY PUT A QUARTER IN YOU, CHUMP.

PIECES OF CRAP LIKE YOU NEED TO SHOW SOME RESPECT--CALL HIM HOKUTO-SAN, DAMMIT!
SSSSSH
HOW MANY TIMES DO I GOTTA TELL YOU?
THAT'S ENOUGH. ALL OF YOU.
WHAT'S MORE, I REALLY DON'T CARE WHETHER YOU CALL ME -SAN OR NOT, SO LET'S JUST DROP IT, ALRIGHT?
THIS DISCUSSION IS BETWEEN ME AND SADA, PERIOD. YOUR OUTBURSTS SERVE NO PURPOSE.
SSSSSH
SSSSSH
IT'S RIDICULOUS TO BE ARGUING OVER SUCH A TRIFLE!

DUDE, FOR THE LAST TIME WE'RE HERE TO TALK TO HOKUTO. QUIT HIDIN' BEHIND YOUR LACKEY, HOKUTO!
SSSSSH
THAT'S AWFULLY BIG OF YOU, HOKUTO-SAN...NOT THAT THESE CRETINS WOULD UNDERSTAND.
SSSSSH


I'VE JUST REALIZED SOMETHING


HM?
HO-KUTO-SAN.
WE SEEM TO HAVE LAPSED INTO A RATHER UNSETTLING PATTERN WHEREIN I'M THE ONE WHO COOKS THE MEAT WHILE THESE GUYS JUST EAT IT ALL!

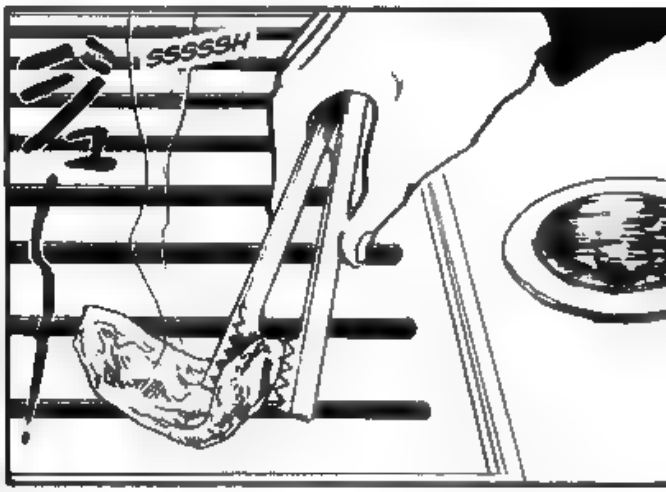

BASTARD! TALKING TO ME WHILE HOLDING UP THAT SLICE OF MEAT...
AH, YES, GOOD.
DON'T YOU WORRY. IF ANYONE TRIES TO GO UP AGAINST YOU, I'LL FRICKIN' KILL 'EM! I'LL TEACH EVERYONE TO FEAR THE HOKUTO CORPS!

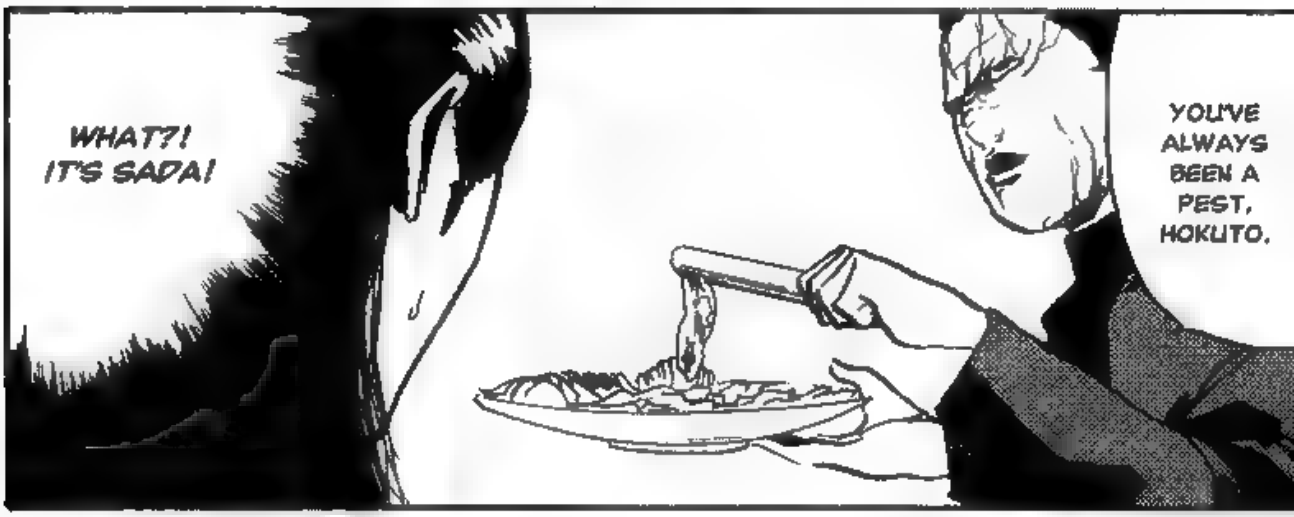
I'LL BET WHEN THEY TURN 20 AND BECOME ELIGIBLE TO VOTE THAT NONE OF THEM WILL. THEY'LL JUST CONVINCE THEMSELVES IT'S ALRIGHT IF THEY DON'T GO TO THE POLLS, BECAUSE IF THEY DON'T SOMEONE ELSE WILL. WITHOUT A DOUBT, IT'S PEOPLE LIKE THIS THAT ARE RUINING JAPAN!
THESE FOOLS HAVE MADE A SERIOUS ERROR IN JUDGMENT-- THEY THINK THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO COOK THIS MEAT, THAT SOMEONE ELSE WILL DO IT FOR THEM. HOW IRRESPONSIBLE!
. . . . . .
VERY WELL! I SHALL COOK NO MORE!
WAIT A MINUTE, THESE GUYS AREN'T COOKING THEIR OWN MEAT BECAUSE I'VE SO GENEROUSLY BEEN DOING IT FOR THEM...BUT WHAT IF I WERE TO STOP? WOULD SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP THE SLACK?
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
NOBODY'S COOKING.
. . . . . .

WILL THIS SILENCE CONTINUE UNTIL I'VE RESUMED COOKING, THOUGH I HAVE YET TO TASTE A SINGLE SLICE?! I'LL JUST HAVE TO COOK MY OWN MEAT...BUT IF I PUT ANYTHING ON THAT GRILL, THOSE CRETINS WILL ONLY START EATING IT AGAIN.

DOES THIS MEAN THEY WON'T EVEN OPEN THEIR MOUTHS UNLESS IT'S TO FILL THEM WITH MEAT?!
THEY AREN'T TALKING EITHER.

SOMEONE'S ACTUALLY COOKING? WHO IS IT?!


SSSSSH


WHAT?! IT'S SADA!
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A PEST, HOKUTO.

YOU GOT THAT, HOKUTO-SAN?
IS GONNA BE ME!

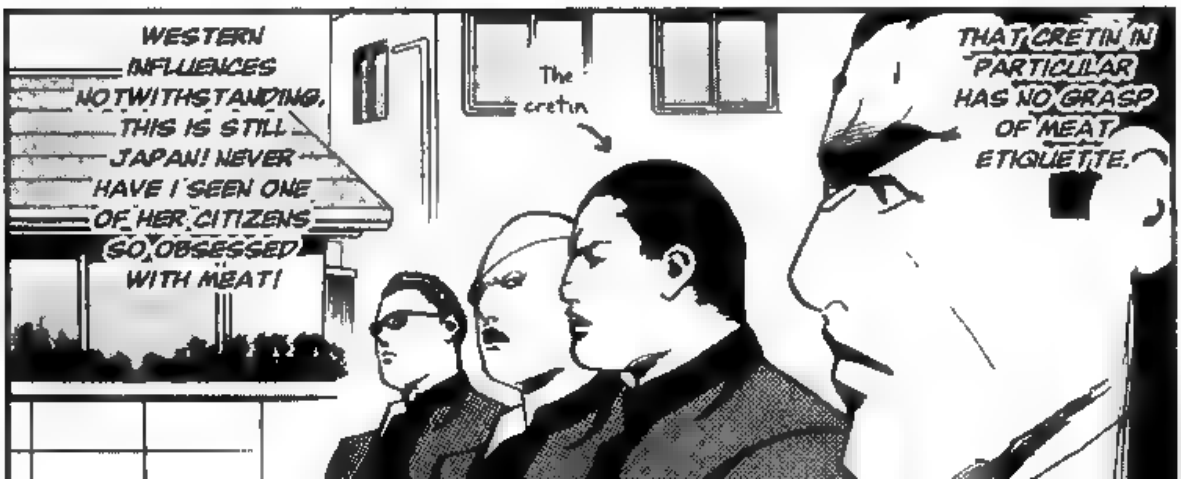
HE'S EVEN PORTIONING THE FOOD OUT ON EVERYONE'S DISHES!
I'M TAKIN' OVER THE CORPS. AND THE LAST MAN STAND-ING...

HM?
HOKUTO-SAN.
AARGH, WHAT A QUANDARY! WHAT HE'S SAYING IS PISSING ME OFF. BUT WHAT HE'S DOING IS COURTEOUS AND POLITE! DOES THIS MEAN THAT HE'S REALLY THE BEST OF THE LOT? AFTER ALL, MEALTIME IS ONE OCCASION WHEN A PERSON'S TRUE COLORS SHOW THROUGH.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? KICKING SADA OUT COULD ACTUALLY DEAL A MAJOR BLOW TO THE HOKUTO CORPS.
BUT WHAT HE'S DOING IS PISSING ME OFF SO MUCH THAT I COULD KILL HIM!
AAH.
HE SPEAKS WITH THE UTMOST LOYALTY...
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME! I'M WITH YOU TILL THE DAY I DIE!
Snagged two slices of meat.
WATCHING SADA ALMOST MAKES ME FEEL EMBARRASSED. WHO AM I TO BECOME ANGRY AT THEM OVER SOMETHING LIKE MEAT?
EVEN THE WAY IN WHICH HE HANDLES THAT MEAT IMPARTS AN AIR OF IMPORTANCE. I SUPPOSE I SHOULD EXPECT NO LESS OF A MAN STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFY ME.
YEAH, WHAT IS IT?
HOKUTO-SAN.
ALRIGHT! I'M GOING TO PROTECT THE CORPS FOR ALL I'M WORTH!
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN THINKING OF NOTHING BUT MEAT. WHAT A FOOL.
SURE THESE GUYS ARE CONCENTRATING ON THEIR MEAL, BUT THERE'S ALSO A SERIOUS ARGUMENT GOING ON HERE.

BY THE WAY, HOKUTO PICKED UP THE TAB.

CHAPTER 119: **MEAT WAVE**

THEY'LL TALK SMACK ABOUT SADA FOR A WHILE AND THEN FINALLY GO, "ANYWAY, WHY DON'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS OVER LUNCH?" FOOLS! DO YOU THINK I'D ACTUALLY FALL FOR THAT?!
I SEE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE. ALL THEY **REALLY** WANT TO DO IS GO EAT SOME MORE MEAT.


WESTERN INFLUENCES NOTWITHSTANDING, THIS IS STILL JAPAN! NEVER HAVE I SEEN ONE OF HER CITIZENS SO OBSESSED WITH MEAT!
The cretin
THAT CRETIN IN PARTICULAR HAS NO GRASP OF MEAT ETIQUETTE.

IN ANY CASE, I WAS RATHER SURPRISED BY THE DEGREE OF COMPOSURE SADA EXHIBITED. THE POISE AND TOLERANCE HE DEMONSTRATED WHILE HANDLING THAT BARBECUE IS PROOF THAT HE'S A MAN TO BE RECKONED WITH!

SOMEONE WHO'S SIMPLY "RARING TO GO" ALL THE TIME WOULD BE UNFIT TO COMMAND OTHERS.

THE FACT IS, SADA KNOWS HOW TO REIN HIMSELF IN WHEN IT COUNTS.

AT FIRST GLANCE, HE LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE WHO WOULD FLY OUT OF CONTROL AT THE DROP OF A HAT... BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE AT ALL.

SADA? WELL...

SAY, YOSHIDA. WHAT KIND OF A GUY IS THIS SADA ANYWAY?

BUT WAIT. COULD IT BE THAT SADA MERELY DISLIKES MEAT? NO, THAT CAN'T BE-- IF HE DISLIKED MEAT, THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE COOKED IT WITH SUCH CARE AND ATTENTION. HMM...THE MORE I THINK ABOUT HIM, THE MORE OF A MYSTERY HE BECOMES!

OH, AND I HEARD HIS PARENTS RUN A BUTCHER SHOP.

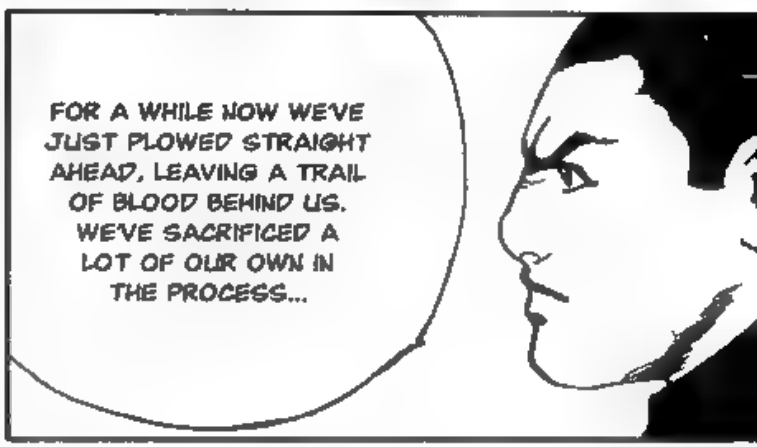
THERE'S ALL KINDS OF STORIES ABOUT HIS MARTIAL EXPLOITS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...BUT BEYOND THAT, I COULDN'T TELL YOU. HE LIKES TO KEEP A PRETTY LOW PROFILE.

A BUTCHER SHOP?!
NOT AT ALL. DETAILS LIKE THAT COULD ALWAYS COME IN HANDY IN A FIGHT!
STILL, THERE'S NOT MUCH POINT IN TALKING ABOUT HIS PARENTS...
WHAT?
AS FAR AS THIS CONVERSATION GOES, BUTCHERS HAVE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH FIGHTING!
The Fool
WHY DID THAT FOOL REACT LIKE THAT WHEN HE HEARD SADA'S PARENTS ARE BUTCHERS?
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHERE HIS OBVIOUS EASE IN HANDLING MEAT COMES FROM. SADA! YOUR MYSTERIES HAVE BEEN UNRAVELED-- I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO FEAR FROM YOU!
STILL, IF THAT INFERNAL SADA'S PARENTS OWN A BUTCHER SHOP...

WHAT IS IT?
HOKUTO-SAN, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?

I NEVER KNOW WHEN HE MIGHT DEFECT TO SADA'S FACTION.
The imbecile
IN ANY CASE, I'LL NEED TO KEEP AN EYE ON THAT IMBECILE.

AND?


FOR A WHILE NOW WE'VE JUST PLOWED STRAIGHT AHEAD, LEAVING A TRAIL OF BLOOD BEHIND US. WE'VE SACRIFICED A LOT OF OUR OWN IN THE PROCESS...

I WAS THINKING THAT INSTEAD OF CONTINUING THIS FEUD, MAYBE WE COULD TAKE A STEP BACK AND TRY TALKING THIS OUT WITH SADA AGAIN.
WELL, I MIGHT BE STEPPING OUT OF LINE HERE, BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST IDEA FOR US TO GO AROUND BEING SO FORCEFUL.

YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO START TROUBLE WITH SADA AND HIS BUTCHER FAMILY!
BASTARD! HE'S ALREADY SWITCHED SIDES!

The idiot
WHAT ARE YOU?! YOU'LL SIDE WITH ANYONE WHO FEEDS YOU MEAT, IS THAT IT? TO THINK THAT I'VE HAD SOMEONE LIKE THIS SO CLOSE TO ME FOR SO LONG...UGH, IT GIVES ME A HEADACHE!
IN FACT, THIS IDIOT WAS THE FIRST ONE IN LINE TO SAY THAT WE SHOULD CRUSH SADA!
IT HAS ABSOLUTELY NO RELEVANCE TO WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT, BUT I WANT YOU TO ANSWER TRUTHFULLY, ALRIGHT?
WHAT IS IT?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU.
YES. MEAT.
MEAT? YOU MEAN, LIKE, MEAT MEAT?
WHICH DO YOU LIKE MORE: ME OR MEAT?
HMM...

THEN WHY DID YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT SO LONG?! I'M ON THE SAME LEVEL AS MEAT, IS THAT IT?
AH. I SEE.
WELL, YOU, OBVIOUSLY.
BUT WAIT—THIS IS MY CHANCE TO PUT HIS LOYALTY TO THE TEST.
THERE! YOU'VE SHOWN YOUR TRUE COLORS, BASTARD!
SAY, WHY DON'T WE GET SOME MEAT WHILE WE TALK ABOUT THIS?
AND, WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I'LL EXPEL HIM FROM THE HOKUTO CORPS WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT!
I BET HE'LL SIT THERE POUTING, A LOOK OF ALMOST, PURE DISSATISFACTION ON HIS FACE...I'M SURE OF IT.
I'M SURE HE WANTS TO GO EAT KOREAN BARBECUE AGAIN, BUT WHAT IF WE GO SOMEWHERE THAT ONLY SERVES
WHY DON'T WE GET SOME SUSHI FOR A CHANGE?
HMM, LET'S SEE...
SO WHAT SHALL WE EAT?

NO, SUSHI'S FINE. IT'S ACTUALLY ONE OF MY FAVORITES.
OF COURSE, IF YOU DON'T LIKE SUSHI, WE COULD ALWAYS EAT SOMETHING ELSE...
HUH? SUSHI?
I CERTAINLY DIDN'T EXPECT-THAT.-
SUSHI
寿司
HUH?
I NEED TO STOP LETTING MYSELF BE SWAYED BY UNFOUNDED SUSPICIONS, AND REFLECT ON HOW I WAS THROWN OFF-BALANCE BY SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS MEAT. FOR A MOMENT THERE, I CAME CLOSE TO LOSING A PERFECTLY LOYAL SUBORDINATE...
PERHAPS HE'S NOT OBSESSED WITH MEAT AT ALL, AND I WAS MERELY OVERANALYZING THINGS.
HI THERE. WHAT CAN I GET FOR YOU?
WELL, YOU GO AHEAD AND ORDER WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
IT SURE IS GOOD TO HAVE SOME SUSHI NOW AND THEN!

THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MEAT THERE.

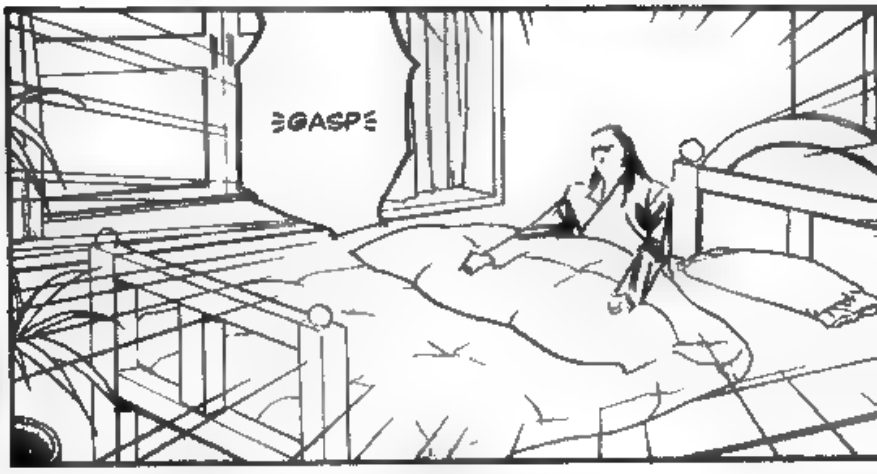
CHAPTER 120: **HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF**

*ON BOXES "WAGYU BEEF"

HAVE ALL YOU LIKE.
HERE, HOKUTO...

N-NO! STOP!

A DREAM...

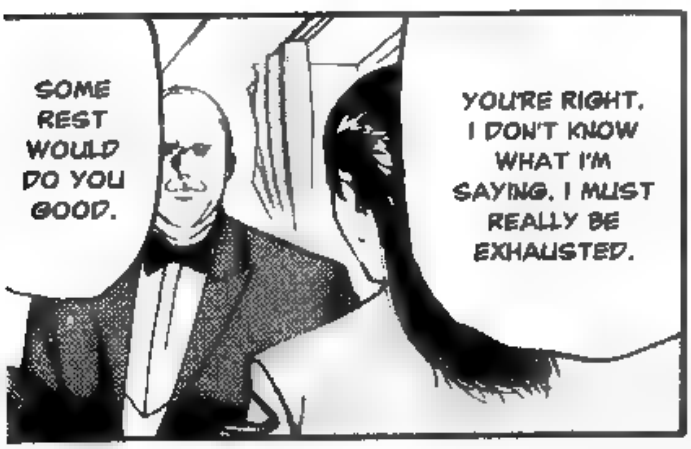

≷GASP≷

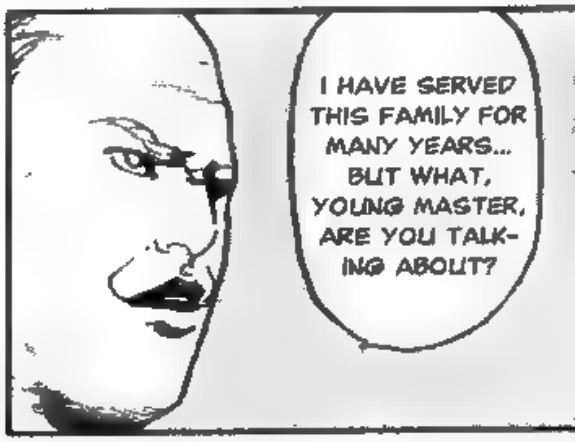
I SEE YOU'VE AWAKENED, YOUNG MASTER.
K-CHK

HM?
KNOCK KNOCK

OH. REALLY?
IT SEEMS YOU WERE HAVING A BAD DREAM.
I'VE BROUGHT YOUR COFFEE, SIR.
OH, IT'S YOU.
UH, NO. THAT'S OK.
WILL WE BE HAVING BARBECUE THIS EVENING, [redacted]
HUH?!
YOU KEPT MUTTERING, "MEAT, MEAT" IN YOUR SLEEP.
I'VE COME TO KNOW YOU QUITE WELL, YOUNG MASTER.
THERE'S NO FOOLING YOU, IS THERE?
YOU SEEM TO HAVE QUITE A LOT ON YOUR MIND. I WOULD ADVISE YOU TAKE A NICE, LONG REST.
OH? AND WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?
YOU KNOW, I SEE YOU DAY IN AND DAY OUT. BUT I'VE ONLY JUST NOTICED SOMETHING ABOUT YOU.
YES. YOU'VE SERVED OUR FAMILY FOR SUCH A LONG TIME...

HM?
I THINK I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE SOMEWHERE BEFORE.


SOME REST WOULD DO YOU GOOD.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING. I MUST REALLY BE EXHAUSTED.


I HAVE SERVED THIS FAMILY FOR MANY YEARS... BUT WHAT, YOUNG MASTER, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HEY THERE, HOKUTO.

HMM...

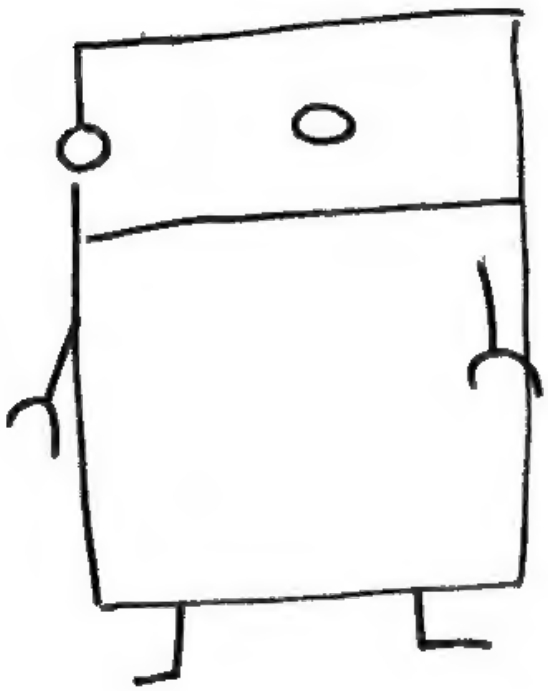
THE NEXT DAY

I COULDN'T GIVE YOU MANY DETAILS BUT, YEAH, HE WAS PRETTY FAMOUS BACK IN MY MIDDLE SCHOOL DAYS.
WHAT?! YOU KNOW ABOUT SADA?
I HEARD YOU'RE HAVIN' A FEUD WITH SADA. THAT COULD GET DANGEROUS, MAN.
AH, HELLO.
YES, SO I'VE HEARD. AGAIN AND AGAIN.
PEOPLE WERE JEALOUS 'CUZ HIS PARENTS RAN A BUTCHER SHOP.
HE'S REALLY THAT FAMOUS, IS HE? SO HE'S NOT. JUST ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE HOKUTO CORPS.
YEAH? LIKE WHAT?
TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT FOR A MOMENT, THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU.
ANYWAY, I'VE HEARD MORE THAN ENOUGH TALK ABOUT SADA FOR A WHILE... AND THAT GOES FOR KOREAN BARBECUE, TOO.
HUH? A GRANDFATHER?
DO YOU HAVE A GRANDFATHER?

FINALLY HE GOT THIS IDEA THAT HE WANTED TO RUN A COFFEE PLANTATION, SO HE TOOK OFF AND HEADED TO BRAZIL. NO ONE'S HEARD FROM HIM SINCE.
YEAH, BUT...WELL, GRAMPS WAS PRETTY ECCENTRIC. HE USED TO GET INTO ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF BUSINESSES, BUT HE'D FAIL AT WHATEVER HE TRIED.
SURE, IF I COULD.
DO YOU THINK YOU'D LIKE TO SEE HIM AGAIN?
I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT HE'S UP TO NOW.
I SEE...
HO-KUTO RESI-DENCE
. . . . . .
YOUNG MASTER! I HEARD YOU LEFT SCHOOL EARLY TODAY. IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

THIS IS A LITTLE AWKWARD, BUT... DO YOU HAVE ANY GRANDSONS?
SOME-ONE YOU'D LIKE ME TO MEET?
ACTUALLY, THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET.
K-CHK
COME ON IN!
HUH?
!!
Y-YOU'RE...
AH! WHY, YOU'RE...

WOW. TALK ABOUT A MEANINGLESS STORY.



MY SHOULDERS HAVE
BEEN GETTIN'
PRETTY STIFF LATELY.

MECHAZAWA

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL VOLUME FIVE

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Cromartie High School Vol. 05

P. 09 **Dense forest**
This forest, or *jukai*, is a thick wooded area that has the dubious distinction of being Japan's top suicide spot. Incidentally, magnetic ore from nearby Mt. Fuji does indeed (as illustrated) interfere with compasses.

P. 12 ***Naruto***
Made from steamed fish paste and usually brightly colored, *naruto* is a garnish for soups and ramen. By itself it has little flavor, but it is used to add to the texture and presentation of dishes.

P. 18 **Convenience stores**
Japan averages far more convenience stores per urban block than cities in North America. Currently, the largest of such chains is 7-11, but others like Lawson, Family Mart, Circle K, Sunkus and AM/PM also have an established presence.

P. 79 **Biker Gangs**
Called *bosozoku* in Japanese, these groups are made up mostly of adolescents and are infamous for tearing down public streets in tricked-out and ridiculously loud vehicles, especially at late hours of the night. While *bosozoku* often choose to live up to their name, they do occasionally get creative and drive needlessly slow in order to clog traffic.

P. 92 **Enka**
A stylized and soulful kind of music that has its roots in Korea, enka has now well and truly established itself as the "traditional" song form of Japan. The genre, often characterized by themes of tragic love, separation and even death, rose to the height of its popularity shortly after the war. It remains quite popular today, though mostly among older fans (to draw a cultural comparison, Takenouchi being a fan of enka is somewhat analogous to a North American high-school badass having a penchant for Patsy Cline).

P. 94 **Crazy Cats**
Beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present, many Japanese comic troupes have gone on to form successful music groups: the Crazy Cats are one of the first to have made the switch.

P. 98 **Yosui Inoue & Takuro Yoshida**
Two famous Japanese pop singers. Takuro Yoshida debuted in 1970, and released a complete collection of his recordings, titled *Yoshida Takuro: IN THE BOX*, in 2002. (Incidentally, "Jun," the opening song for the *Cromartie* anime, is one of his works.) Yosui Inoue, who was most active in the '70s, has been referred to as "the Bob Dylan of Japan."

Continued...

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Name stamps

Whereas Westerners typically sign official documents with their signatures, the Japanese use small stamps called *banko* engraved with their family names. While a simple signature is often acceptable, a *banko* is generally considered to be more valid...despite which, it is indeed true that people with some of the more common family names can pick up a cheapie *banko* for 300 yen or less.

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Gyoza

Gyoza are pan-fried wonton skins filled with minced meat and vegetables (most typically pork and cabbage). In the west they are known as pot stickers because of their tendency to stick to the sides of the pot while being browned.

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Sesame oil

Called *rayu* in Japanese, this spicy oil is commonly used in Chinese cooking, and is a favorite condiment for gyoza.

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Muscle Brothers

Possibly a reference to the team of Kinnikuman and Kinnikuman Great from the manga and anime series *Kinnikuman* (U.S. title: *Ultimate Muscle*).

P. 136

Kanpaku Sengen

An English approximation of this song title would be "Declaration of a Domineering Husband." In Japan, its sexist lyrics have been the cause of many an enraged housewife. The artist who originally wrote and performed this song in 1979 is a fellow by the name of—you guessed it—Masashi Sada.

P. 141

Korean barbecue

Typified by thinly sliced meat served raw and cooked by the customer just prior to eating, Korean barbecue has proven to be a major hit in Japan. Whereas the Japanese *yakiniku* variety is cooked over a gas-powered grill, dunked in sauce and then eaten as-is, traditional Korean *bulgogi* is cooked over a charcoal brazier and wrapped in lettuce prior to eating.

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Wagyu Beef

The *wagyu* in the somewhat redundant term *wagyu* beef literally means "Japanese beef."